New Republic

APRIL 4, 1949

THE MIDWEST IS WORRIED

A REGIONAL REPORT

By MICHAEL STRAIGHT

THE GREEK PROGRAM IS PURELY MILITARY

By MARK GAYN

PORTRAIT OF BOB TAFT

By WILLARD SHELTON

15¢

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New Republic

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PUBLISHED WEEKLY AND COPYRIGHT, 1949, IN THE U. S. A. BY EDITORIAL PUBLICATIONS, INC., 40 EAST 49 ST., NEW YORK 17, N. Y. ENTERED AS SECOND-CLASS MATTER, NOVEMBER 6, 1914, AT THE POST OFFICE AT NEW YORK, N. Y., UNDER THE ACT OF MARCH 3, 1879. SINGLE COPY 15¢; YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION, SIX DOLLARS; CANADA & FOREIGN, SEVEN DOLLARS. Printed in the U. S. A.

WASHINGTON WIRE

CHERRY-BLOSSOM TIME. . . . Every bough is a-bloom, every bird a-twit; income tax is behind us and the DAR's annual raid still ahead. Washington is lovely now in the spring, tra-la. As to other matters, well—

The Kiwanis Clubs brought 2,200 boys from 22 states to see their Capital and picked as keynoter to inspire the lads with youthful zeal—guess who? Why, nobody but Senator John W. Bricker, to be sure.

Senate GOP leader Wherry beat his breast in Manhattan about "spendthrift" Truman Democrats and their feckless finances. While he made the New York welkin ring, House Republicans were voting two to one for the Rankin multi-million-dollar veterans' pension grab (first version).

Then, too, the happy, happy public-relations men of banks and business continued their drumfire against the President's Council of Economic Advisers, notably "radical" Leon H. Keyserling. Simultaneously business management was increasingly adopting Keyserling's advice to avoid a slump by cutting prices.

Next Monday the foreign ministers sign the big Atlantic Pact here in a fancy ceremony. Once signed, it is almost unthinkable that the Senate should decline to ratify. If the alliance is to have meaning, however, instead of being only another Kellogg Pact, popular understanding of its awe-inspiring responsibilities seems necessary. Some sponsors seem to want America to enter with eyes closed. If the pact means anything, it repudiates once and for all the dogma against entangling alliances as well as the constitutional provision that it is the Senate which declares war, which never meant much anyway.

When Senator Connally tried to soft-soap the opposition last week by saying that if an aggressor once cuts loose, "It is entirely within the wisdom of the US to decide what action to take—if any," we think he actually did the pact a disservice. He was pretending there is no moral obligation when it is the essence of the agreement that it does exist. The pact will have more weight in the long run if it gets a good threshing out in the Senate with, say, 20 intelligent dissenting votes than if it is rubber-stamped with a "boo" at Russia and only three or four isolationist mossbacks like Jenner, Watkins and Donnell voting "Nay."

Do Americans have as good government as they deserve? With all our soul we think not. We think our governmental institutions are 50 years behind the times. Recent examples:

Though both parties are committed by platform pledges to civil-rights legislation, the Senate has just found itself incapable of bringing such legislation to the floor. In the key vote 23 GOP Senators joined Dixiecrats to overrule Barkley by five votes and continue the filibuster.

The House reversed itself last week on the original veterans'-pension-grab bill within half an hour, voicing its real convictions when it voted anonymously, turning a flipflop and approving the bill when it voted on the record where the American Legion lobby could retaliate. Ultimately enough members gagged at the shoddy business and rejected the measure, 208 to 207. Let it be understood: the brave 208 took their political lives in their hands. They were, for the most part, Democrats; the GOP is gloating over the chance to pick them off.

Finally, Social Security Commissioner Altmeyer has just testified anew that the great old-age-insurance system is running into fiscal difficulties. Why? Because Congress hasn't the courage to vote big enough contribu-

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tory rates from workers and employers to accumulate the proper reserves; it leaves the rate at two percent when six percent is needed.

We gladly note the highbrow American Political Science Association has become aware that something's wrong in Washington and has a Committee on National Political Parties and Elections making a survey. The tentative APSA report argues that the American political party as constituted just isn't strong enough to protect individual congressmen. They want to do what's right, but don't dare to.

Notes. Truman is oozing conciliation toward Congress at every pore and it's something to see. . . . Odds are on confirmation of Reclamation Commissioner Michael Straus despite the unparalleled ferocity of Senator Downey's attack; the basic issue is whether federal reclamation shall aid small Western farmers or the big landowners favored by Downey. . . . Trade-union weeklies are subscribing to an informed Washington column by Nathan Robertson, one of the first written specially for them. . . . Senator Morse called Senator-designate Frank P. Graham (D, N. C.) last week one of the most "Christlike men he ever knew"; Senator Bricker said all right, but in the days of atomic-energy secrets that wasn't enough. Graham, whose gentleness covers the wisdom of the serpent, said nothing.

Labor MP Richard Crossman and Labor Lord Strabolgi told Washington reporters independently that the National Health Service is the single most popular asset of the Labor Party for the election campaign. . . . Loopholes now wholly exempt life-insurance companies from taxes on their annual profits on "security holdings and other investments"; these amount to $1.5 billion annually, says Treasury Secretary Snyder, who thinks it's outrageous. . . . Congress watered down rent control by providing local option everywhere but in the District of Columbia, where most congressmen pay rent; a special bill here continues controls unrelaxed.

Washington T. R. B.

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VOLUME, 120, NUMBER 14, ISSUE 1792, NEW YORK CITY, APRIL 4, 1949 **New Republic**

THE UN DOES HAVE A FUTURE

HAS THE UNITED NATIONS long to live? As the Fourth General Assembly of the UN reconvenes, many of its leaders at heart believe that One World is bankrupt and that its last asset, the UN, should be liquidated.

The reasoning of this argument is powerful. The United Nations was created to administer the peace, not to win it. But there has been no peace settlement; and, given the division of Germany, there will be none. The UN was constructed on the principle of unanimity among the Great Powers. But there is no unanimity; instead there is cold war. The basic contrast between East and West splits the UN in every function from major endeavors to administrative procedures. There are no common values on which to build a common structure; there is not even a common vocabulary. There is no mutual trust on which to negotiate. There is no longer a mutual faith in the one binding force of the UN: the ability of its members to resolve their conflicts through the UN and without resort to war.

The UN Charter remains the only common standard of political morality among nations. All UN members acknowledge the Charter, but what does the Charter mean? It joins all peoples in these common ends: to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights and in human dignity; to establish respect for justice and international law; to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. If these common terms—"fundamental human rights," "human dignity," "justice," "law," "social progress" and "larger freedom"—ever represented common concepts it is clear that they do not today.

In today's world, the means of communication provided by the UN often increase the tensions they were designed to ease. The deadlock in the Security Council prevents direct negotiation on issues concerning the Great Powers. All efforts for international control of atomic energy are stymied while Ukrainian and Russian delegates assert for the hundredth time in useless sessions of the Atomic Energy Commission that the majority proposals represent nothing more than the age-old ambitions of American monopolists to throttle the industrial output of the USSR. The Assembly becomes a forum for political warfare in which the remaining shreds of good will are torn apart by diatribes. Its discussions serve as a platform for abusive propaganda. Its method of reaching decisions stresses the winning of votes rather than the conclusion of agreements.

The technical work of the Secretariat is considerable. The progress of the specialized agencies, all of which are boycotted by the USSR, is great. But the predominant purpose of the UN is political. And its predominant function is to regulate the relations of the Great Powers. If it fails to lessen the war danger, it fails altogether. And it is failing today. The center of political gravity is moving steadily away from the UN.

The UN is predominantly a Western instrument today. And the West no longer sees the UN as the way to peace. America first disregarded the UN in the Truman Doctrine. Now Britain acknowledges that the UN's failure is the direct cause of the North Atlantic Defense Pact. The pact fully recognizes the supremacy of the UN. Yet it gives permanent recognition to the UN's present weakness. So it further diminishes the role of the UN. The Secretariat understands this. It recognizes that the pact is established and must be followed by military lend-lease. It is not strongly opposed to it. But it realizes that it means lean years and a return to UN principles only after the stabilization of the non-Soviet world.

If the West has given less than full allegiance to the UN, at least its nationals have served as true international civil servants, and its delegations have worked for the growth of UN sovereignty. The Soviet Union has shown no such allegiance. Between the principles of the Charter, with its assumption of peaceful coexistence of all states, and the Soviet concept of Marxism, which assumes that the conflict of capitalism and communism must end in revolution or war, a basic contradiction exists which has shaped the Soviet attitude toward the UN.

The Soviet design for a world organization was for a concert of powers; a perpetual Yalta Conference through which a private caucus of great nations exercising unlimited sovereignty might regulate their

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affairs and act together to bring any obstreperous smaller nation into line. The Soviet government rejects any notion that international law can bypass sovereign governments and apply to individuals. It regards the speeches of small nations as "the chirping of sparrows on the Paris roof-tops." It distrusts the Assembly as an institution. It sees the Security Council as the focal point of the UN and greets any hint of amending the rules of the Security Council or bypassing its powers with passionate denunciations. It regards the specialized agencies as superfluous. It treats the work of the Secretariat with little respect.

It has never filled more than 27 of the 180 positions allotted to its nationals on the Secretariat. Like all employees, the 27 take the UN oath to disregard all instructions from national governments and give sole allegiance to the world organization. But for Soviet officials the oath apparently means nothing. They live in self-imposed isolation at Glen Cove. They cut themselves off from all social contacts. They live without their wives and children, who were shipped back to Moscow last summer. They take a strictly Soviet attitude on major issues. They are essentially Soviet officials on assignment from the foreign ministry to study the UN and the strange ways of the West before returning to Moscow. The claim of Jacob Malik, that the arrest of Valentin Gubitchev as a spy by the FBI was illegal because he entered the US with a diplomatic passport, clearly illustrated the Soviet approach to the United Nations.

A dynamic political organization incorporating Russia and the West is impossible today. Yet the need for political organization is enormous. As the flower of One World scatters in seed, Churchill calls for a series of regional organizations; Justice Roberts demands an Atlantic union; the Federalists pursue the wraith of world government. But the one practical alternative to the UN, as this argument suggests, is to stabilize the status quo short of complete breakdown by giving institutional recognition to Two Worlds.

The advantages of this course are considerable. The Eastern world is already accomplishing economic, social and political unification. The Western world, holding common values, lacks common institutions. Freed of Soviet obstruction, the Western world might rapidly advance toward enforceable international law and representative international government. The key problem would remain the relationships between both worlds. They would be governed by a confederation whose institutions and methods would be designed to meet conditions as they exist. In place of debate, there would be negotiation; in place of a diffusion of voices, a delegation of authority to a few representative spokesmen; in place of majority rule, unanimous consent.

Whether the United Nations would become a federation of the West or a confederation between East and West would be subordinate in importance to a mutual recognition by both sides of the need for reorganization. There might be no common agreement. Yet the force of history is moving in this direction; to resist it might mean to lessen the chance of world peace; to direct it along the most progressive lines may be the best way to save peace.

This is the argument for recognition of Two Worlds; it is powerful. But to us, it remains unconvincing. First, the West has not yet forsaken all hope of world coöperation. Despite the nature of its major institutions, the UN offers many channels for negotiation. In at least one instance—the Berlin currency dispute—the formula produced by the UN was acceptable to France, Britain and Russia and was killed by the United States.

Second, the West is not yet an international community capable of organizing itself. The absence of the Russians did not prevent bitter disputes at the ITO Conference at Havana, or the frustrations of the UNESCO Conference at Beirut, where a voting bloc of Latin American and Islamic nations imposed its will. A Western federation would be justified only if its members delegated more sovereignty to it than they now yield to the UN. But given the diversities that exist among Western nations, the federation would tend to be no more than an alliance for common armaments.

Moreover, the UN is carrying out tasks of great importance today. It is laying the basis for peace, for a new life in Kashmir, Israel and Indonesia. It is winning agreement for the expansion of world trade in the economic commission for Europe. It offers the one means of mobilizing world public opinion which otherwise can be expressed only through the channels of the foreign offices, and the press, which the Soviet government discounts in advance. In contrast the voice of India, of Chile, of Poland, in the UN, must be heard.

For the UN represents the best hope of millions of peoples in all lands, whose sacrifices brought the UN into being. This faith cannot be shaken as a terrier worries a rat.

Since One World is unrealized and Two Worlds are not finally established, what course is left for the UN to follow? The alternative is not to make the UN over, but to accept the UN for what it is. It will function in a stable world; it cannot create that world.

During the years of tension, in which the two worlds

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are stabilized, the role of the UN may be largely to ignore the insoluble problems involving the direct interest of the Great Powers. It may work, instead, in the areas where the application of moral suasion evokes a clear response. Given tension between the Great Powers, the means of force and dictation of Article Ten of the Charter are inevitably denied to the UN. Instead, the UN is developing the techniques of mediation and conciliation of Article Six. And this may be all for the good.

For the second task of the UN is to keep itself in readiness for the happier years in which the techniques it is establishing can be used to resolve the world's major conflicts.

Meanwhile, to the extent that the stabilization of the non-Soviet world requires its integration, this integration should advance on the economic, social, cultural and military levels, rather than at the level of a constitution for the Western world which excludes 800 million people and freezes the world's division.

If this program is attacked as bypassing the UN, then the UN will cheerfully acknowledge that standing aside is preferable to being cut to pieces in the cold war. If it underestimates the political implications of atomic power, then it is still true that history knows of few sudden transformations in patterns of government. Since nothing is certain in the future, it is wisest to protect the UN seed corn.

THE WEEK

RANKIN'S PENSION

The defeat of Representative John Rankin's pork-barrel veterans' pension bill by a margin of one vote (208-207) is a victory for sound social security. Had Rankin's extravagant proposal of $90 monthly pensions for all 65-year-old veterans of World Wars I and II been approved, President Truman's program for equitable social security could not even have been considered. Cost of the Rankin pension plan would have pyramided to approximately $125 billion in its first 50 years, according to Budget Bureau estimates, with the annual expenditure ranging between $2 and $6 billion.

The liberal young Representative John Carroll of Colorado distinguished himself as leader of the Administration forces to kill the Rankin bill, and in the process devised a formula that may come in handy when there is further anti-Administration legislation to defeat. Administration men introduced so many conflicting amendments that eventually pleas to send the bill back to committee where they could be unsnarled were heard from both Democratic and Republican sides of the aisle.

The final vote was not on the issue of pensions. It was straight party politics. John Rankin, bitterest of Dixiecrats, is eternally eager to embarrass President Truman in every way possible. This time his opposite extreme, Vito Marcantonio (ALP, N.Y.), presumably with the same intent, lined up with him. And the House Republican leadership saw the Rankin pension-grab bill as a fine opportunity to put the Administration in an impossible position. Minority Whip Charlie Halleck and the ranking Republican member of the House Ways and Means Committee, Daniel Reed (R, N.Y.), both voted for the pension. When Rankin rose to speak for his boodle bill he addressed his remarks, significantly, to the Republican side of the House. The GOP, which is committed on the record to (a) a contributory social-insurance program and (b) economy, followed his lead by voting in bloc for (c), a pension program which would have ruled out both (a) and (b).

DRUGGISTS ARE DIVIDED

President Truman's health program is a pill that the American drug industry doesn't intend to swallow. Diligently coöperating with the American Medical Association, the large drug firms are among the top donors to the anti-public-medicine campaign.

Contributions by 26 drug companies to the National Physicians Committee, AMA ally, totaled more than $122,000 last year. Upjohn, Parke-Davis, and Eli Lilly each reported $15,000 donations as required under the Lobbying Act. Other heavy contributors included Hoffman-LaRoches, Inc., and American Cyanamid, $10,000; Rexall, Mead-Johnson, Abbott Laboratories, Inc., $7,500 each; E. R. Squibb and Sons, Sharpe and Dohme, $5,000 each. Johnson and Johnson, Walgreen and 14 other drug firms reported contributions of from $500 to $4,000 apiece.

This year even greater financial assistance from the industry is expected by the private medical lobby in view of the growing public approval of national health insurance. The drug interests were warned in the current issue of their conservative trade journal, the *American Druggist,* which published two opinion polls showing that when the facts of the Truman health program are known, the people favor the plan. The magazine's managing editor, Bernard Zerbe, polled 2,500 druggists throughout the country and found that as of February, 16.8 percent favored national health insurance, as compared with 9.4 percent last December. Editor Zerbe had to admit, "The more the retail druggist knows about the Truman proposal for national health insurance, the more likely he is to favor it."

Another poll, appearing in the same issue, reveals that two out of three

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"opinion leaders" in American communities favor the Administration plan. Conducted by Maurice Mermey, public-relations expert for several large drug firms, the poll shows that of the 1,500 presidents of civil organizations, 67 percent favor national health insurance. Mermey remarked ominously that the 67 percent "is, indeed, a significant figure, for it foreshadows the possibility of broad grass-roots support for the Truman program. . . . Advocates can be satisfied with their score among citizens' organizations, while opponents have much work and soul-searching ahead as regards this large and important area of public interest."

The outcome of the polls was so alarming that the magazine printed a separate editorial calling on the neighborhood pharmacists to "explain socialized medicine and its dangers to their customers" and urging physicians and pharmacists to "become political as well as professional brothers-in-arms in the battle to preserve private medical practice."

The profits of the drug interests reached an all-time high in 1948. According to the Department of Commerce the dollar volume for retail drug stores was $3,693 million—an enormous gain over the $1,562 million in 1939. The industry attributes the postwar increase to the widespread lay publicity given recent dramatic developments in modern therapeutics. Actually, the industry fears that the public will stop buying patent-medicine home remedies when good medical care by competent physicians is available. The health bill now pending in Congress would limit government payments for medicines to "prescribed drugs which are unusually expensive." The list of prescription drugs would be broadened as the insurance system expands and is able to pay for more drugs.

NEW YORK POST SYNDICATE

While most of the industry cries "free enterprise" v. "socialization," one drug trade journal has managed to keep its perspective. The *Oil, Paint and Drug Reporter* recently editorialized: "With respect to medical care the drug industry has a unique position, a divided loyalty, and has been leaning somewhat too much toward what it has been told is the sentiment of the medical profession."

DAKOTA PULLS THE SWITCH

PIERRE (NR correspondent)

The public-power issue has split South Dakota wide open. The immediate reason is that the Republican majority in the state senate has tabled without a record vote a house-approved bill authorizing the people to establish consumers' public-power districts when they wish.

The issue is a hot one out here since the two Dakotas rank 47th and 48th in rural electrification, far behind even the deepest South. Rural-electrification agencies must pay from one to 2.5 cents a kilowatt hour wholesale, compared with the one-third to one-half cent which co-ops in such public-power regions as the Tennessee and Columbia River Basins pay. Furthermore, supply is scanty. Already public applicants have filed for more power from the big dams being built on the Missouri River under the so-called Pick-Sloan plan than will be initially available when the first units are ready in 1953 or 1954. The US Reclamation Act under which it is to be marketed provides that public bodies get the preference over private companies.

Years ago Nebraska became the first state-wide public-power province—there isn't a private supplier in the state. Does this mean that Nebraska will soak up much the largest share of the precious new lower-cost supply, and that states mainly supplied by high-cost private companies must go without it? The Dakotas, Kansas, Colorado and Wyoming were not alert to the possibility until the South Dakota Republicans lined up for the private power companies.

Their party platform last fall re-

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iterated the old power-trust demand that public power be sold at the dam to all applicants without discrimination. This caused an outburst in South Dakota. Some Republicans repudiated their own platform. Democrats made great gains in the legislature. Combining with public-power Republicans, they passed the consumers' power-district bill by a large majority in the lower house. Then the senate killed the bill without a record vote.

The Farmers' Union and the state REA Association favored the bill, along with former Governor M. Q. Sharpe. One of their principal arguments was that South Dakota, although the site of two of the largest Missouri River dams being built under the Pick-Sloan plan, stood to lose the power to more alert states.

Though public power has been set back in South Dakota, some progress has been made in other Missouri Basin state legislatures.

A NEW SENATE LIBERAL

Senator J. Melville Broughton (D, N.C.), who died the day before he was scheduled to make a speech prolonging the filibuster against changing the Senate rules, has been succeeded by a liberal. Governor Kerr Scott appointed Dr. Frank P. Graham in Broughton's place.

As president of the University of North Carolina, Dr. Graham has been one of the most outspoken progressives in the South. He has weathered Southern criticism for his position on Truman's Committee on Civil Rights, and has survived attacks on his loyalty in connection with his post as president of the Oak Ridge Institute of Nuclear Studies, which gave him access to atomic secrets.

His entry into the ranks of Southern Senators may strengthen President Truman in the fight for the civil-rights program when it comes up again. No advocate of immediate drastic measures, Dr. Graham is on record as favoring anti-lynching and anti-poll-tax legislation, and the "equal right of qualified Negroes to vote in both primaries and general elections."

OUTSIDE AMERICA

Whether China's Mao Tse-tung will follow the lead of Joseph Stalin or become an Asiatic Tito is one of the great unanswered questions on which the future of the West-East cold war may depend. An event in one of the most obscure parts of the world provides a hint to a possible answer to the question. This event was a meeting of Mongolian Communists in an "All Inner Mongolian Cadres' Conference" at Wang-yeh-miao, seat of the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Government, about 200 miles west of Harbin in Manchuria. The conference took place last August but news of it only recently reached the outside world in a message to the London *Economist*.

The Inner Mongolian government was created in 1947 as an amalgamation of the Communist-sponsored Manchurian Mongol movement and of the Inner Mongolian movement originally centered in Kalgan. Its head, a Mongol named Yun Tse, had been a pupil of the North China Communists. In the winter of 1947 his government launched an attack on the Mongol princes and lamas, the aristocrats and rich landlords. Land and livestock were distributed. But the policy was reversed on the receipt of directives from the Chinese Communist Party in the spring of 1948.

At the Wang-yeh-miao conference last August, one of the principal speakers was Kao Kang, representing the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. He preached moderation in moves against "middle farmers" who are regarded as strategic allies in the Chinese agrarian revolution. Other parts of the program are reminiscent of Tito's views, rather than Stalin's. And a sentence of the report from the conference is even more revealing: "While Outer Mongolia provided the Inner Mongolians with inspirational guidance, the Chinese Communists provided them with intellectual leadership and . . . with the armed force required to end Kuomintang rule and evict the Mongol aristocracy."

The point is that Outer Mongolia is part of the Soviet Union, so that the relationship between Stalin and Mao Tse-tung may be found in the difference between "inspirational guidance" on one hand, and "intellectual leadership" and "armed force" on the other.

★

Florence, Europe's richest treasure house of renaissance art, was less damaged than many other Italian cities during the war. But one of her great losses was five of the six famous bridges across the Arno: the Germans wantonly destroyed all but the Ponte Vecchio before their retreat in August, 1944. Two years later the Florentines were called on to say how they wanted the bridges rebuilt, especially their favorite, the splendid Ponte Santa Trinita, built by Bartolomeo Ammanati in 1540; and they voted overwhelmingly in favor of restoring them exactly as they had been. But the mayor of the town and most of his aides were Communists with different tastes; they wanted new spans pretty much in the style of the Moscow subway, functional but artistically monstrous.

These modernists might have had their way had it not been for the Italian national election last spring. Partly because of American intervention, the Communists were beaten; and the mayor of Florence had no Communist Minister of Public Works to back up his ideas. The Florentines chipped in to get the Ponte Santa Trinita rebuilt according to Ammanati's original plans; they bought bricks at 100 lire each and stones at 1,000 lire. Still there wasn't enough money to get the work started. Then an American, Samuel Henry Kress, who has made a great fortune selling goods at nickels and dimes in chain stores, made a big

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contribution. (He also helped restore the Malatesta Temple in Rimini.)

By the end of next year, five of the beautiful old bridges will have been rebuilt in their original forms, thanks to the generosity of an American merchant and to an unpublicized American victory on a little-known sector of the cold war.

★

Moroccans of the French Protectorate, a huge African area that extends from the Atlantic down beyond the Atlas Mountains to the Sahara Desert, first heard of the Four Freedoms on a day in November, 1942. The message came to them in the form of a short-wave broadcast from the American battleship *Texas*. Then tens of thousands of American soldiers came ashore to make good a promise that the Moroccans would be liberated from the restrictive paternalism imposed upon them by the pro-Nazi Vichy regime. This was "Operation Torch."

It is now almost six and a half years since the Moroccans were liberated by American blood and toil, and time to see how the Four Freedoms are working. Britain's liberal Manchester *Guardian* reports:

> No freedom of the press, which is kept in order by a preventive censorship operating with such vigor that the leading nationalist organization, the Istiglal, is popularly know as *Le Parti Blanc* (the White Party) because even its name is automatically censored out of its newspaper, whose columns on most days present large white spaces filled only with the word *Censure*. No right of political assembly, no right to form trade unions, and of course no representation on government except through membership of a purely consultative Conseil du Gouvernement consisting of equal numbers of French and Moroccan representatives, who are specifically excluded, however, from discussing "political matters." [The French show] a will to govern and an uninhibited insistence on the subordination of the claims of individual liberty to those of public order and authority, which present a striking contrast with the prevailing tendencies of the Fourth Republic. Here . . . is the strong-willed authoritarian France. . . .

Apparently the Torch went out.

PERCY WINNER

THE MIDWEST IS WORRIED

Farmers, businessmen and workers fear depression but dread Communism more and are wary of rapid change

by Michael Straight

SOMEWHERE, as the Fair Deal slows down on Capitol Hill, a train may be steaming up to bear President Truman on a campaign tour for his program through the small towns of the Middle West.

Saturday nights are quiet in these towns now. New cars stand for sale in store-room windows. Layoffs are continuing and factories are cutting back to four days a week. Homes above $12,000 go unsold; those below $10,000 unbuilt. Farm prices are falling still, and this autumn, when the record corn crop is processed into meat, they will fall further, as every farmer knows.

The men and women who may greet the President are better off than Americans have ever been. They are "set like concrete" against government controls. They are concerned more with protecting their property against Communism than against depression. Too many still believe that if the businessman and the farmer get what they want, the rest of the nation will get along fine. Yet here, in rock-ribbed country, they feel insecure. They are not ready for rapid changes. But they want more than reassurances. They want simplification and clarification in leadership. Unlike the responsive crowds of last summer, they will ask the President searching questions and greet generalities with hostile silence.

Few I talked to doubt that depression is due; very few have any idea how the government will meet it. Almost none is aware that Congress has already committed this country to the maintenance of high levels of employment by whatever means are necessary. Given this uncertainty, the refusal of industrialists to expand capacity sufficiently to prevent mass unemployment is as much an unwillingness to accept an uncovered risk as a decision of selfish monopoly.

"If we keep the people fully informed," the President declared, then they will support "our fight against the special interests." The truth is that on day-to-day developments the people are wonderfully informed, and on basic issues, very poorly informed. The radio is strong on objective reporting and weak on long-range analysis. The dead weight of a tory press with its editorial prejudice and its biased reporting bears down on the Middle West. The clutch has been on so long that many are no longer aware of its grip and repeat the worst slanders as established truth.

The government is limited in its task of enlightenment. The only real method is participation, and except for the alumni of the old AAA, the federal government is a remote abstraction and politics an evil pursuit to most God-fearing citizens. Dramatization, the second method of developing understanding of political issues, has been a lost art since Roosevelt died.

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As always, the Democratic Party is the last to recognize as its function the mobilization of support for the President's program. "My Democratic committeeman doesn't know me and he doesn't want to!" burst out a Columbus reformer, Henry Worley, at a meeting to which I spoke. "If I go to see him he doesn't know what I'm talking about! He doesn't know where he stands on any issue until he gets by mail a marked ballot to hand out!"

In structure, in spirit and in leadership the Democratic Party is neither equipped nor designed to build support for a nationwide program in developing battles. Only in the narrow field of patronage is there a continuing relationship between state and nation in politics.

Generally, in the Middle West, the major forces which joined together to gain victory in 1948, the organization Democrats, the unions, the farm organizations, the coöperatives, and the liberals, are stronger than they have been for a generation. They are further ahead in seeking common counsel. They are weak where they have chosen by common consent to pursue their own, independent ways.

Organization Democrats

IN THE ABSENCE of strong national leadership, the political future of the Middle West depends quite considerably on the records of the state administrations. Those of Illinois, Missouri, Ohio, Michigan, Kentucky and Indiana are all Democratic. Two of the six Governors are outspoken liberals. All preside over conservative legislatures, thanks mainly to the disproportionate strength held by rural voters. So, in general, the legislative outlook is dim; the job is to provide good administration, to consolidate party strength and to prepare the record for upcoming elections.

The developing record differs from state to state. Kentucky is held in the grip of the conservative machine of Governor Earle Clements. In Missouri, the machine candidate, Governor Forrest Smith, is already under fire for permitting the return of gambling.

Only in Indiana is the 61-day legislative session over. A Democratic House passed most of Governor Henry Schricker's program. A Republican Senate killed his measures to extend civil rights, to clean up the housing scandal perpetrated by a fake redevelopment commission, and to liberalize unemployment benefits and primary-election laws. The legislature passed a bill prohibiting racial segregation in schools and a reassessment of all property for real-estate taxes. It financed a state bonus by a non-graduated income tax. It killed a state FEPC law by the combined efforts of a well-heeled Chamber of Commerce lobby and the unscrupulous reporting of the Indianapolis *Star*, which branded the bill as a CIO patronage grab.

In Ohio, Michigan and Illinois, the similar programs of Frank Lausche, Mennen Williams and Adlai Stevenson to spur low-cost housing, to modernize the state constitutions, to enact state FEPC laws, and to get rid of anti-labor legislation, are still in committees. Ohio, where labor failed to endorse the Governor, still appears to be a lost link in national politics. Michigan, in contrast, seems full of vitality and hope. In Illinois, Governor Stevenson is cleaning out the executive departments after years of corruption. His appointments have been first-rate and his position is strong.

The status of many Midwest liberals, however, is shaky. The Democratic Party organizations exist to control nominations rather than to elect candidates. While their ability to elect is lacking, their power to nominate is almost unchallenged by labor or liberals. Last year they nominated liberals because the outlook seemed hopeless and they preferred to send the liberals to the slaughter. Now several beachheads on the organization front have been gained by successful candidates. But they are only beachheads. And if liberals succeed in passing the Fair Deal program, and so consolidate the future of the Democratic Party, they may be the first casualties of the victory they have won. For given the assurance of success in 1950 and 1952, the organization leaders will take the liberals out in primaries and put in their real candidates. "His term is short and my memory is long," organization leaders will say of a young congressman who is not making the right appointments at the crack of the patronage whip.

The Trade Unions

FROM A Washington office, Middle Western labor becomes a monolithic force, applied by cohesive, purposeful leaders. From the gates of the Buick plant at Flint, as the afternoon shift ends, come old men talking in Polish; Lutherans who opposed Roosevelt because he opposed Germany; farm boys fresh from submarginal homesteads; Southerners who are still Fundamentalist in religion and Dixiecrat in politics.

They have no time on their way home to stop at the new building of UAW Local 599. The Local 599 newspaper concentrates on union happenings. The more active and democratic a union is, the more preoccupied it

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seems to be with its internal problems.

The CIO and the AFL are still in running conflicts. A struggle smolders within the great CIO unions, Auto and Steel, for Midwest CIO leadership. The nation may be made suddenly aware of labor's power. But within labor no sudden transformation takes place. The greatest barrier to unified liberal leadership in the unions —the Communists—are on the way out. Well-entrenched Communist leaders, whose right to lead was won by their skill *as trade unionists*, were made to walk the plank for the Progressive Party. They distributed leaflets, levied special assessments and defied the directives of the national CIO. So they were exposed and isolated. In former strongholds such as Dayton, Cleveland and Chicago they are limited to obstruction and to efforts to organize new unions of the unemployed. The "right wing" since the Portland convention of the CIO is no longer intimidated. It hopes to gain a major objective, control of the UE, at the union's September convention.

With the democratic Left in control, the activity of the CIO and its acceptance of responsibility for the welfare of non-labor groups are increasing. Young leaders are anxious to work with all groups. The UAW is active everywhere, although, since dissension is the life of the union, a good deal of its energy is spent against itself. In the Steelworkers, where the district director is boss, the miners' tradition of splendid isolation dies hard. But directors like James Robb of Indianapolis are doing outstanding community work and making the fullest use of university extension services to give courses in economics and industrial relations to local leaders.

The mutual distrust of union officials and Democratic organization men is still great. Yet despite the third-party tradition of the UAW, August Scholle, CIO state director in Michigan, was able to reverse CIO tradition and lead in the effort to rebuild the Democratic Party. He bucked a Wayne County alliance between conservative machine leaders and James Hoffa of the Teamsters. He ran candidates for delegates in every precinct, sent out 30 paid precinct workers from Ford Local 600 alone on primary day. He led 300 CIO delegates in a sweep of the state convention and helped to nominate, and then elect, Williams.

In the AFL, the work of Labor's League for Political Education is altogether good. Among the craft unions the conviction persists that labor's salvation lies in a high tariff, and a well-stacked state Department of Labor. In Illinois the padded payrolls of the Green administration were filled with AFL officials. Building-trades leaders in Dayton are still tied up with the Bricker machine. Far from preparing their members for the end of segregation, some AFL unions are striving to perpetuate it. The fight against the state FEPC in Illinois is being waged by two organizations: the Illinois Manufacturers' Association and the State Federation of Labor. Despite enlightened leadership, the Railroad Brotherhoods are no better.

I asked the brakeman of a C&O train why Negroes were barred from his union, the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen. "Why, they have their own union!" he said in surprise. "Maybe they'd like to be brakemen as well as porters," I suggested. "See here," he said, "they're a different class of people from us whites and they're happy right where they are." He went back to reading the Chicago *Tribune*.

The Farm Organizations

IN EARLY SPRING farm kids slog through mud in the tiny playgrounds of Midwest rural schools. Farm families travel miles by bus for medical diagnosis and treatment, at enormous expense. As costs rise, farmers mine their soil to maintain living standards, and have nothing left but pride when old age comes. As concentration of national wealth grows, farm income is threatened, as farmers have known ever since the days of George Robert's farm letter. Federal aid to education, national health insurance, broadened social security, support of labor's effort to win higher living standards are all in the long-range interest of the farmer. Yet the rural legislator, a small-town lawyer with a retainer from the railroads, is still the staunchest ally of the city banker and real-estate operator in resisting these measures.

Truman's astonishingly large farm vote represented the short-range fear

DRAWINGS BY AMY KASAI

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of men who were not getting loans on corn and tobacco. But it suggested also a long-range shift in the attitude of farmers; a return to the great protest movements which recognized that the farmer's well-being was bound up with the welfare of the entire nation.

Corn-belt farmers are enjoying record prosperity now. Their debts are low and their income is high; yet their concern over the future is growing. Farm productivity is rapidly advancing. Six million farms today can feed all Americans plus another hundred million people. Better nutrition at home cannot absorb farm output, as world production recovers and farm exports decline.

Farmers want to produce all they can. They dislike controls. They fear bankruptcy. They turn to price supports as prices fall. They know that as our capacity to produce outruns our capacity to consume, parity prices can be maintained only by restricting output. They speak of restrictions as a "last resort." Instead, they become a first resort. For billions to finance storage will not maintain farm prices at maximum farm production. Many products cannot be stored, and the stored produce depresses prices as it accumulates. Restrictions on output must come if prices are to be pegged at 100 percent of parity. In the absence of a better program, restrictions will be announced this autumn.

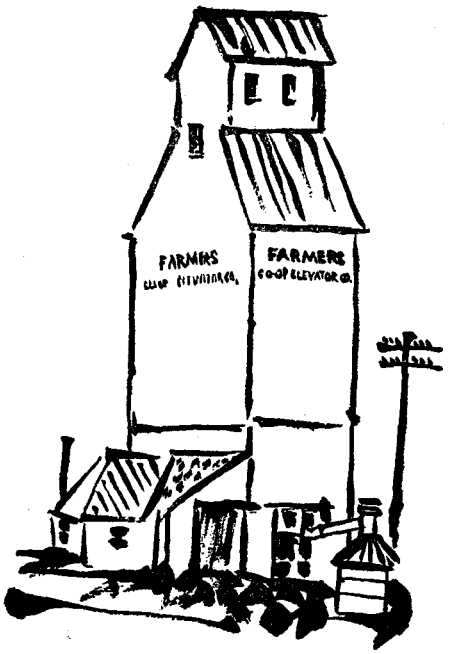
Yet restricting output is no solution, and most farmers know it. It encourages monopoly. It prevents readjustments. It perpetuates malnutrition. It sets farmers against city dwellers. For those farmers who produce corn, tobacco, cotton and peanuts it provides the relief of a subsidy. The corn belt produces perishable foods. They find a ready market during full employment; the flow cannot be stored, or restricted, to maintain parity prices if national income, and with it the demand for food, declines.

Consequently the farm outlook is more uncertain than at any time since 1933. Some groups are proposing a two-price system—a 100-percent parity price and a food-stamp price. Far-sighted leaders know that price policy is not the heart of the problem. Led by Allan Kline and Murray Lincoln, the Farm Bureau Federation, although opposed to most liberal measures, is moving toward a liberal farm program and a full-employment economy. The National Farmers' Union, which fought with labor, the small Southern farmers and the Farm Security Administration against the restrictive policies of the Southern planters, the grain monopolies, the Farm Bureau and the AAA, now finds itself aligned with its former enemies in support of full parity. Its emphasis is still on full employment and social reform; it has fought hard, if unsuccessfully, for every Fair Deal measure. Now under pressure of its huge grain coöperatives the Farmers' Union is saying in effect, "Since everyone else is grabbing, the farmer might as well grab too."

The shifting alliances and internal divisions among the farm organizations present a dilemma to the alert farmer. He knows that government action affects his life more and more. As his decisions take on political implications, his attitude toward politics changes. He knows that farm organizations working with manufacturers' associations have opposed most of labor's objectives and have obtained passage of legislation to curb unions, in Washington and in 33 state legislatures. He realizes that at the same time labor has consistently supported the agricultural objectives of the farm organizations and today is a dominant political force. His objectives in international policy at least are the same as labor's. The Grange in the West, the Farmers' Union in the Plains states, have won important objectives by joint legislative action with organized labor. On a national scale, the partnership formed in Wisconsin, Oregon and Washington can give the liberal movement a secure majority.

The Cooperatives

THE ONE VISIBLE bridge between farm organizations and unions in the Midwest is the coöperatives. They are spreading out from both ends at the



farm and the grocery store; they have miles to go before they meet.

"I can remember when my grandfather hauled his crop on a cart into St. Louis and sold it on the streets," Fred Henkle told an ADA conference of farm and labor leaders in Chicago. "Today if the farmer gave away wheat, bread would cost 10 to 15 cents," he says. "If he gave away milk it would cost 12 cents in Chicago. If he gave away wool, suits would sell for $30." Henkle is chairman of the Missouri Farmers' Association, with a membership of 126,000: one half of Missouri's farmers. He has cut the market spread from 45 percent to 17 percent on the major products he handles. He sees the coöperatives as a major solution.

The problems of the coöperatives are great. "We're up against national corporations when we try to establish our brands, and hell's to pay." They are in local politics for many reasons. Grain-storage facilities must be increased, for example, so that the farmer can keep possession of his grain as long as possible and free himself from the distributor's grip. The revolving funds set aside for coöperatives in the farm banks are wholly inadequate. Coöperatives are constantly denied membership on representative government agencies such as hog-serum-control boards. The pres-

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sure of private lobbies on state and national legislatures to tax the co-operatives to death is great. "They just don't like our breed of cats," says Henkle. "The 80th Congress hacked away on us," he adds, "and we hacked on some of those fellows."

Yet the concern of the coöperatives is to increase the farm share of retail prices rather than lowering them and increasing consumption. In areas where coöperatives are strongest, retail prices have been the last to follow the fall in the cost of farm products. In politics the coöperatives are often conservative, and will be, until city consumers assume responsibility for marketing.

Rural coöperatives have succeeded. Urban coöperatives have lagged. Now with the full backing of the UAW and other unions, consumers' coöperatives are spreading in the Midwest. Eastern Michigan is the proving ground for a new type of consumers co-op. Four are operating; thirteen are being built. In layout and administration they resemble supermarkets, stripped of incidentals, with no display or extra equipment and with minimum stocks. Payroll costs and general expenses are down. The Central States Coöperatives Association is directing them; the Coöperatives Department of the UAW encourages locals to elect co-op committees and holds regional conferences to promote the plan. Through ownership and operation of processing plants such as soap factories and coffee-roasting establishments, these consumers co-ops are opening a channel between the farm and the store. Where they connect, joint ownership of processing plants and joint distribution of dividends provide the basis of lasting collaboration.

The Liberals

EVERY COMPONENT of the Fair Deal is gaining strength. The concept itself is gaining. In the absence of a unifying force there is no single direction. Each component tends to concentrate on its own self-interest. The task of thinking in terms of the aggregate—of providing the clear concept of the national interest and the nature of progress, around which all components can join together—is the liberals' task.

The election did more than return a national administration to power. It lifted the liberal movement from its coastal pedestals and planted it in the Middle West. There the climate breeds a hardy strain of liberals: they lack the East's cultural veneer, but are ahead in the basic drive for achievement.

They are shedding perfectionism and excessive individualism—the liberals' besetting sins. There is no longer a sense of self-consciousness in the border states when Negro and white meet. Save for a few Progressive Party members who pursue half-truths with tragic sincerity to wholly wrong conclusions, the scars of internal conflicts are healing. Yet the external conflicts are close and real. Liberalism, for its true adherents, remains a daring faith. And organization remains a major barrier. It is one thing to sponsor a single unpopular cause; another to belong to an organization which fights on every front. Outside the big cities, a handful of teachers, a local lawyer or two, a minister, and the organizers of minority groups make up the little band. In the growing number of towns and cities where one group controls the only newspaper, the radio stations and the banks, the area of independence shrivels; freedom of action is constricted; the sense of fear and oppression becomes stifling. The broadening base of political responsibility and the narrowing base of corporate power collide in indeterminate conflict a thousand times a day.

Since the liberals are the cement and not the bricks of a reform movement, their independence remains an important quality. Yet the movement gains only by accepting new responsibilities in each community. And as the old-line parties falter, tasks multiply. A shortage of leadership is the universal problem; the same small dedicated band works for seven different causes seven nights a week.

When the liberals accept responsibility for the back-breaking tasks of precinct work, knowing the unreliability or ineptitude of the political machines, it becomes a matter of survival for them to recruit for their forces those who live by patronage and work in precinct organizations, not as volunteers, but as full-time employees. In these cases liberal organization must be directed toward an actual political party even at the cost of losing those who would belong to a liberal movement but recoil from organized political activity.

There is no uniform pattern in American politics. In cities like Chicago and Kansas City, where political control is tight, the task of a liberal organization must be to work alongside the parties, to dramatize issues, to provide forums, training and funds for young people, and so to accelerate their rise in the political parties. The Independent Voters of Illinois, organized on a precinct basis, is outstanding in this role.

Wherever labor takes an active interest in public affairs, new leadership is generated at once among all the latent forces of good will. I found one example in the superb job done by a group of Notre Dame faculty members working in the South Bend ADA with the leaders of three UAW locals. Even more impressive was the successful campaign waged by Michigan liberals such as Margaret Price of Ann Arbor, who, backed by the CIO, worked in the ADA and Independent Democratic Clubs to reorganize the Democratic Party.

There are a few disturbing signs. Among the second rank of liberal leaders, who stand on the fringe of federal appointments, there is a loss of militancy which reflects the confusion in Congress and the President's aversion to reformers. In one or two areas where the liberal movement has won power, those who control it seem more concerned with perpetuating their control than with expanding and developing new leadership. Since the outlook is bright, it is necessary again to remember that power always corrupts; that the task is "to strive, to seek, to find, *and not to yield.*"

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DEMOCRACY'S DISTANT COUSIN

In two years almost all civilian control has been removed from Greece's militarists leaving the decision to arms alone

by Mark Gayn

ATHENS

IN THE LARGE pale-yellow building on Constitution Square, the Parliament chambers stand dark and silent. As in many past crises, the parliamentarians —with their own consent—have been sent home, "to allow unimpeded preparations for a military campaign."

The Supreme Defense Council, which could exert some checks on the military, has been replaced with a War Council, which can exert almost none. A new government has been set up under that ailing perennial, the 90-year-old Themistocles Sophoulis. Under him in the cabinet sit the leaders of four major parties, including Constantine Tsaldaris, chief of the right-wing Populist Party.

But the public eye is no longer on Sophoulis, Tsaldaris or the government. Real power has finally slipped into the waiting hands of General Alexander Papagos, Dictator Metaxas' friend and chief of staff, the King's grand chamberlain, and now commander-in-chief of the armed forces. Papagos has won for himself freedom from "interference" by the cabinet, a "preventive" censorship, and control over all armed men. With the emergency powers he has under martial law, he can also deal with all other problems, including judicial and administrative. Officials, American and Greek, deny it vigorously, but there is little doubt that Greece has acquired a "strong man."

It is equally plain that this year's government platform has been reduced to the single plank of military action. For months, funds earmarked for reconstruction have been transferred to the war budget. Rehabilitation plans have largely been shelved. More men have been put into uniform, more restrictions imposed, more suspects rounded up in mass raids. Government-held Greece today is unmistakably geared for war.

When the campaign is finally launched this spring, General Papagos will have at his disposal one of the largest military establishments in recent Greek history. Included in it will be the regular army of 162,000 men, the small navy, and the growing air force; a National Guard 50,000 strong; a gendarmerie of 26,000 men; a town police force of 7,400 men; a rural police force estimated at 20,000 to 30,000; two types of rural militia, MAY and MAD, estimated at some 30,000 men; 14 units of "municipal security guards"; and, finally, the newly created force of 20,000 hand-picked war refugees. At the end of 1948, the United States Treasury fed 280,000 Greeks who bore arms, or would soon. This year, the number will rise.

Americans returning here after a brief absence blink at the spectacular growth of the military establishment. For, in effect, much of it has come into being surreptitiously, and often over bitter US objections. Examples abound. Last April, the Greek High Command made a "provisional" boost of 15,000 in armed strength, to terminate on October 8, 1948. The promise has been forgotten, and new boosts have since been made. Last fall, the War Minister told me the National Guard would be sharply reduced, and incorporated within the army. The plan has been dropped. When MAY and MAD excesses put their military worth in doubt, the US Mission made a solemn compact with the Greek government for their disbandment. Successive periods of grace brought the deadline to August 1, 1948. If anything, the two forces have since been expanded. But on the excuse that MAY was to be dissolved, the government has created "municipal security guards," which are nothing but ill-disguised private armies of local Populist bosses.

The US Mission, which must approve all such projects, is too punch-drunk to be able to halt this spread of rightist irregulars. "How can we be effective," pleads an official, "when our whole program has been turned topsy-turvy by the bandit successes and the confusion in Washington?"

Probably the most disturbing aspect of this picture is that one out of every four of these armed men serves in the extra-legal, para-military rightist bands —the notorious "X" which dominates the cities of Lamia, Kalamata, Tripolis and Sparta; the "Independent Fosterides Battalion" of Anton Choush ("The Sergeant") in the city of Drama; the bands of General Napoleon Zervas, and many lesser lights of ultra-nationalism. Equipped by the Greek army and at least partly fed by the US Mission, these units serve as a "shadow government," engaging—in the words of a leading Athens paper—in "plunder, arbitrary and compulsory taxation, unpunished assassination, arson, slaughter, ravishment and robbery." And, one might add, in a suppression of all non-con-

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formance, including Premier Sophoulis' own hapless Liberal Party.

In Kalamata last year, in a paper called the *Flag*, a rightist boss wrote candidly:

> We shall not play games, just as they [the Communists] don't play them. This means that we must think as they do, and follow their methods. When they butcher unarmed people, we must too. When they plunder, we do. When they rape, we rape. We must protect our imperiled civilization and history. . . . At this critical moment, we cannot enforce the law and say fatalistically, "Come, Oh Lord, and take our heads. . . ." Tomorrow, when the danger is over, we shall have time to chatter about the law. Until then, it will not be surprising to have honest fighters for our liberties outlawed occasionally...."

All these—the "X-ites" and generals, the village guards, gendarmes and doughboys—now await the spring of blood letting which will match in violence anything seen in Russia and China.

General Papagos—a quiet, gray-haired man dominated by the King—will fight his campaign this year against a background of general economic paralysis.

Since the Truman Doctrine was proclaimed in 1947, we have pumped well over $650 million into the country, more than $175 million of it in ECA aid. These funds pay roughly for two-thirds of the war costs, and two-thirds of the trade deficit. The truth is, however, that despite these expenditures, our economic program for Greece has failed.

Inflation, arrested last summer, is again inching ahead. Industrial production lags behind schedule. Profiteering is rampant. Credit, in this speculative atmosphere, is tight. Interest of one percent per week shocks no one. The market is glutted with goods, but high production costs plus profiteering have priced them right out of world and domestic markets. Despite prosecution, the flight of capital continues. The multimillionaire Bodossakis estimates that more than half of the Greek merchant marine is hiding under the Panamanian flag. It is also his guess that 15 million gold sovereigns (about $260 million) are being hoarded illegally in the US.

The civil war, of course, supplies the prime explanation of the chaos. Some 700,000 people in this land of 7.5 million are war refugees. Perhaps as many are "official" indigents, not earning enough to live on. Some 325,000 men bear arms for the king; perhaps 50,000 more are rebel guerrillas; and some 35,000 men and women are in jail and prison islands for political offenses. The civil war, with its ruinous military budget, manpower drafts, ceaseless and destructive guerrilla raids, has impoverished the nation. Production is hurt, transportation disrupted, and fear discourages economic effort.

But the civil war does not explain away all of the paralysis. Some of the blame must rest on profiteering by the politically powerful and unscrupulous "Kolonaki crowd," so named after a rich Athens district. It was this crowd which late last year, through a "corner," boosted the price of olive oil at a time when oil was pouring out of the ears of this oil-exporting nation. It is this crowd, too, which manages to divert a sizable portion of US supplies, brought here to revive industry, into more profitable speculative channels.

The unwieldy bureaucratic machinery (staffed by 350,000 officials) and an archaic tax structure must also share the blame. A factory outside of Athens pays a local tax on each truckload of raw materials coming in, and each truckload of finished goods going out. Fantastic imposts, such as "overtime, whether worked or not," have made Piraeus the world's most expensive port for unloading—and they are exacted even on supplies brought in by US charitable organizations. And, for another typical example, for 20 years Patras has been collecting a highway toll "for the construction of a church." Though begun, the church will never be completed. Its architecture has been ruled to be "not in accord with church principles."

Some of the worst abuses have been corrected by the US Mission. The Greek pressure groups and their friends in the government, however, have been resisting what mild efforts there have been to establish an honest and equitable system of taxation. The bulk of state revenue still comes from indirect taxes, which largely soak the poor. The tax on a pack of cigarettes, for instance, constitutes 70 percent of the price.

But when all this has been said, the economists here return to the basic fact that Greece has always been near-bankrupt. In 1937-39, when the ingenious Dr. Hjalmar Schacht bought most of the Greek products with blocked marks, Greek exports paid only for two-thirds of the imports. The balance came from remittances from Greeks in the United States, tourists, and the larger merchant marine. In 1947-48, exports paid for only a third of imports, and this time there were no tourists, no German market, no rich uncles in York, Pennsylvania. The postwar deficits were first met by British loans and the UNRRA largesse, and later by the US Treasury. What is worse, the products of Greece—tobacco, olive oil, currants and figs—are luxury items. Impoverished Europe must get along without them for years to come, or buy them at lower prices in Turkey, Spain or Italy.

The Greek economy will remain rooted in sand until there is an economic revolution. The US Mission has drawn some ambitious plans for hydroelectric plants and large-scale mining of lignite and other minerals. But even the Mission's own experts admit the program is a political daydream.

Meanwhile, however, two facts are being concealed from the Greek and American peoples. Since no normal recovery is in sight, economic plans for Greece presuppose a sharp lowering of living standards—far below the unimpressive prewar levels. The Greeks have not been told this. Nor have the Americans been told that Greece will continue to require our economic aid far beyond 1952, or go into bankruptcy within 30 days.

The situation is underlined by the spectacular Communist successes. In the past two or three months, Com-

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munist-led units have seized and held briefly half a dozen provincial capitals. One key city, Karpenision, they held for 20 days. The government campaign in Vitsi, in the north, has been stalled since last September. The mass arrests in Peloponnesus in December has also got nowhere—though there was no Communist frontier nearby at which the government could point an accusatory finger. And to add insult to injury, the Central Committee of the Communist Party chose Grammos for its last conference—that very same Grammos which the army took at such high cost last August.

But the headlines were deceptive. The Communists, too, were having their problems. The cumulative effect of weariness, high casualties, the growing military force thrown against them, and, finally, the Tito-Cominform split finally told last November. It resulted in an internal cleavage, a purge of the party command and—at the Grammos conference on January 30-31—a complete and dramatic reshaping of the party strategy. The gist of the conflict was found in this paragraph of the January resolution:

> The basic peril to the party in 1948 was opportunism. Among certain top-level party members there grew a spirit of opportunism, which held that the Monarcho-Fascists would succeed in re-establishing a certain political and military stability. This, in turn, meant that our struggle has no future, and that we must confine ourselves to guerrilla action until such time as military support from abroad will save us. Some other high cadres showed their opportunism in a surrender to and fear of the problems of armed struggle. The party has now dealt decisively with compromise and opportunism, and has liquidated them.

Though written in the tortuous Cominform prose, the lengthy resolution was neither foggy nor abstract. It placed the Greek Communists in line with other Communist Parties of Eastern Europe. It forswore compromise, promised an aggressive fight against Western capitalism, and reclaimed for the party a place of undisputed leadership in the revolution.

Within the party, the resolution (and the Politburo conference in mid-November) reasserted the dominance of Nicholas Zachariades, the handsome 46-year-old Communist theoretician, longshoreman and health addict. (He takes open-air ice-cold showers in his mountain retreat.) General Markos Vafiades, according to a well-founded report, was removed from command last November as chief exponent of "guerrillaism." With him went a woman member of the Politburo, a few members of the Central Committee and the entire top leadership of the Athens underground organization.

DRAWINGS BY STEFANELLI

Even more important were the military results. It was after the break with "guerrillaism" that the Communist-led forces had launched their winter offensive. The Communists regard its successes as a vindication of Zachariades' view that the guerrilla state has come to an end, and the time is ripe for the Communist revolution to acquire a large and aggressive regular army.

The Grammos blueprint lists many steps yet to be taken by the Communists before Papagos launches his drive. Among them is the accumulation of large army reserves (the resolution hints that victory could have been achieved last year had not Markos failed to gather adequate replacements); intensified activities in Macedonia, Central Greece and Peloponnesus ("to make it the Second Front"); and intensified urban unrest ("our Third Front").

If anything, the blueprint is a bold gamble. If the shift from guerrilla to large-scale mobile operations succeeds, the rebellion will continue strong when 1950 rolls around. But if it fails, Zachariades will have to bear the responsibility for the collapse of the Communist-led revolution.

Much will depend on the politicians and generals here, who thus far have proved singularly inept in dealing with civil-war problems. Certainly, the guerrilla raids have antagonized large segments of the population. With intelligence, and with a modicum of social and economic reform, the government could have exploited this antagonism. But so great are its callousness and incompetence, so vast the profiteering and corruption, and so cruel the rightist terror that people turn to the Communists as to a lesser evil. Nothing in what Papagos or the new government has said or done thus far shows any sign of a growing political maturity. The sword is still the sole answer.

The crisis extends beyond Greece, to our own policy. For, two years after President Truman announced his aid plan, it is obvious that we have failed in both our avowed goals—economic recovery and destruction of the Communist forces.

Unhappily, the crisis finds us unprepared. Washington apparently believed it could put down the rebellion by investing a few hundred million dollars. Its thinking certainly has not

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gone beyond a general hope for a strong, anti-Communist Greece. Specifically, it has not considered what kind of political system we wished to see installed here as soon as Communism had been crushed.

From the outset, we allied ourselves with the Populist machine, one of the most corrupt and brutal in Europe. We knew that it lacked both a reform program and popular support, but—as in China—we would not look elsewhere. Nor would we strike at the government's backers in Kolonaki, and break their stranglehold on the Greek economy.

As in China, the Greek extremists made good use of our preoccupation with Communism. They traded their support of our foreign policy for our support of their domestic policy. It is an axiom here that no government could survive for four weeks without our support. Yet, we have made little use of this great power. The blame for the general distress, thus, is as much ours as it is the Greek government's. Both it and we showed no awareness that a civil war is a political war, and that major reform is likely to be more effective than a hundred shiploads of weapons.

By last October, we had to admit that the Populists had failed. There was confusion, and some Americans looked with a friendly eye even on General Zervas.

Thus, in two years, we have traversed the road from the defense of Greek democracy to the support of what is its distant, withered cousin. The few civilian checks on the military have now largely been removed. And one is entitled to doubt that the cabinet could fire Papagos, for it has been specifically enjoined from "interference with military affairs."

Washington faces 1949 without a program for Greece. If, in the contest between the armies and theories of Papagos and Zachariades, Papagos fails, he will have brought down with him not only his king, but our own policy-makers and strategists. And if the events in China carry any lesson, Washington is in for more trouble.

PORTRAIT OF A CONSERVATIVE

Robert A. Taft walks larger than ever on the stage of the Senate and rehearses for the White House role in '52

by Willard Shelton

LAST JUNE, after Governor Dewey had been nominated by the Republican National Convention, Senator Robert A. Taft of Ohio dropped his personal publicity man in Washington and forswore all presidential ambitions. He would be "too old," he shyly indicated, to make another drive for the nomination bauble which escaped him by a freak in 1940 and which Dewey in 1948 wrenched from his hands by superior finesse and force. Today it is safe to say he is not so modest about his destiny.

Despite the sensational Truman-Democratic election victory, Taft is again the most influential single member of the Senate. It is not excessive to say that he is the leader of the Senate; for practical purposes he has far more power than the unfortunate Scott Lucas of Illinois who holds the title of Democratic floor chieftain but commands only a theoretical majority.

Dewey's disaster last November was rough on Dewey, no doubt, but it did not unduly depress Robert Alfonso Taft. Taft, these days, is full of ginger and enthusiasm—or at least as cheerful and delighted as his character permits. As soon as the 81st Congress met he battered down a comically misnamed GOP "young Turk" revolt and got the rules changed to reëstablish himself as chairman of the GOP Policy Committee. Two weeks later he learned in a test vote, as he and Arthur H. Vandenberg exchanged pleased smiles on the Senate floor, that he had the power to upset President Truman's technical majority and impose checks, balances and negations on the whole Fair Deal.

The arithmetic is simple. Although the Democrats, with 53 active members, have a Senate majority on paper, at least four or five Southerners can be counted on to vote against the Administration on almost any key decision involving Truman's program. Taft's problem, therefore, is relatively easy; if he can hold the Republicans together and merely avoid offending the Southerners, nature in its splendid course will let him block or sharply modify virtually any measure of which he disapproves.

Taft and the GOP can control the Senate with the aid of Harry F. Byrd of Virginia, whose committee vote helped shelve Truman's nomination of Mon C. Wallgren as chairman of the National Security Resources Board. He can control it with the help of Richard B. Russell of Georgia, Southern floor leader in the successful Dixie filibuster which ended with Truman's administration forces riddled and impotent.

The first test came January 18 on a trivial bill to exempt tickets for inaugural-week functions from amusement taxes. Six Democrats voted with 41 Republicans to beat the bill as three other Democrats blithely skipped the roll call—and the cat was out of the bag.

A second test came when the Democrats, in an excess of optimism, introduced a public housing measure which Taft was not allowed to co-sponsor, although he had long been a co-sponsor of the bipartisan Wagner-Ellender-Taft bill. Taft responded by helping to write a Republican bill which in some respects was superior to the proposed Democratic legislation. Before the bill got through committee, "bipartisanship" had been restored, and Truman's personal proposal of 1,050,000 public housing units in the next four years had been cut to 800,000.

During the brief "young Turk" revolt, Senator Flanders of Vermont publicly advised Taft not to put up a fight for the Policy Committee chair-

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manship, Taft's ideas were not popular, Flanders suggested, and the Ohio Senator would "hurt his own reëlection chances" next year if he insisted on the limelight. But after the housing bill was completed, Flanders and Taft amiably joined in claiming government savings of $5 billion in "the next 40 years" because the Truman bill had been sliced down.

In the Senate Labor Committee hearings on the Taft-Hartley Act repealer, Taft gave the Democratic majority a brutal pushing around. Yet he won a public accolade from Senator Wayne Morse of Oregon, a liberal Republican who clashed repeatedly with Taft's leadership in the 80th Congress.

Chairman Elbert Thomas of Utah, a gentle but somewhat quixotic statesman who originally hoped to get "harmony" with the Republicans on a new labor law, sat in befuddled silence as Taft carried the ball in committee press conferences and the Republicans took over the questioning of witnesses. The Senator from Ohio, Morse finally stated, deserved great credit for his "fair-minded objectivity" in considering "shortcomings" in the T-H Act. Morse and Taft are likely, ultimately, to have some fights, but in committee the five-man Republican minority, including still another liberal—Aiken of Vermont—stood generally united. Taft anticipates a good deal of fun, and numerous amendments, when the repeal bill reaches the Senate floor.

Taft is not unconscious of his surprisingly restored power. When a reporter recently sought his views on a T-H statement from CIO president Philip Murray, he patiently ran over the 18 points Murray had listed and commented, "Yes, I think we'll change that," or, "No, we haven't reached agreement on this." There was not the slightest difference in his manner, or his apparent self-confidence, from the days of the 80th Congress when Republicans ruled both houses numerically and claimed a "mandate" to throw out the New Deal.

Taft is driving his 60-mule team of Republicans and Southern Democrats with firmness and skill. For the liberal Republicans he has a few concessions on the T-H Act; privately he will admit that changes must be more sweeping than if the GOP had won the election. The Southern Democrats are even easier for him to handle. He can vote as his personal necessities dictate so long as he does not deliver the Republican bloc decisively against the Southerners on civil-rights issues. That was precisely his technique when Vice President Barkley tried to reinterpret Senate rules so as to choke off the filibuster. Taft himself voted to uphold Barkley, and thus avoided inviting political retaliations in Ohio from irate Negro citizens. But he blandly said that for each Republican the issue must be a matter of conscience, and enough GOP Senators voted with the Southerners to override Barkley and let the filibuster drone on, wrecking Truman's program in an intra-party fight.

Taft is basking, moreover, in a wave of warm approbation and pleasant endorsement which comes, on occasion, from unlikely sources. When he faced challenge from the "young Turks," the onetime pro-Dewey Scripps-Howard newspapers handsomely remarked that regardless of formal title, "wherever Taft sat would be the center of the Republican" wing of the Senate. This was, Taft himself has remarked, the "nicest thing" the Scripps-Howard press has ever said about him. Yet he may have obtained equal satisfaction from the recent compliments of Edwin A. Lahey, columnist for the Knight newspapers.

Lahey, probably the closest newspaper friend of CIO president Philip Murray, surprisingly teed off in a vehement attack on the labor leaders who have already chosen Taft as their No. 1 target for oblivion in the 1950 elections. The Ohio Senator, said Lahey, had been "bum-rapped" by charges that he killed the OPA and bum-rapped again in his "supposed hatred of workers." Lahey paid tribute to Taft's undeniable integrity. If the unions beat him, said the columnist, they will "have little to boast of" in knocking off "an honest, independent conservative whose greatest weakness is his inability or his unwillingness to cope with the Taft myth that the left wing has created."

For all these blessings Taft can thank his patented brand of bumbling honesty, his sincere devotion to what he calls freedom, his enormous capacity for work, his basic hatred of the New Deal, and the fact that intellectually he is so far superior to ordinary anti-New Dealers that he can make his remarks sound sensible. He can thank also, of course, the twin phenomena of Dewey's unexpected defeat, which rescued him from oblivion, and the Democratic Party's unavoidable struggle over civil rights.

The woods are full of wisecracks about Taft's colorless personality and maddening obstructionism (looks like a "kindly, large-mouthed bass" and "hasn't learned a thing since William McKinley"). But the majority of Senators and newspapermen who know him well agree that, although he may never be popular, he deserves the Scripps-Howard estimate of his senatorial talents. Few have forgotten that Taft, almost singlehanded, blocked President Truman's draft-strikers bill in May, 1946, after the House had whooped it through in a hysteria

DRAWING BY SHARP

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matched only by a declaration of war.

Some union political leaders, who face the job of trying to beat Taft for reëlection in Ohio next year, deny the legend of the Senator's "honesty." They claim he is as tricky and adroit as other vote-seekers, and as ready to trim his sails.

It would, of course, be absurd for Taft to ignore expediency. He is a skilled legislative practitioner, and the essence of legislative operations is to compromise when you cannot win. His leadership during the 80th Congress was exerted through a most expedient arrangement with Vandenberg; Taft, a quasi-isolationist, ran Republican domestic policy but kept off Vandenberg's toes in the foreign field. It was interesting this year to observe him, with his mind on reëlection, say kind words about the Atlantic Pact.

Yet few fair-minded observers question Taft's readiness to fight—win or lose—for the type of society he calls "free." Because of this, though he fears and opposes anyone allegedly "soft" toward Communism, he personally objected in 1947 to the non-Communist-affidavit sections of the Taft-Hartley Act. He thinks the right to strike is part of the necessary price our society pays for freedom.

Taft does not deny his essential conservatism. In a speech at Niles, Ohio, last January he asserted that the five successive Republican defeats were not due to any popular repudiation of GOP principles but to the party's own "failure in presenting its principles." He called for a return to the "forceful and aggressive manner" in which McKinley and Mark Hanna in 1896 had presented the party's "conservative philosophy." That was probably the first time in a quarter of a century that a leading Republican politician has openly praised the ghost of Hanna.

In New York recently Taft expounded for the Mortgage Bankers Association his program of public housing for one-fifth of the people in the lowest income group. "Of course," he remarked, "the program does deprive [this group] of incentive and freedom, but most of the incentive and leadership in the nation will be found, in any event, in the other four-fifths." Doubtless he still hopes that the shiftless one-fifth will vote for him. He also suggested, in the course of this speech, that a majority of American homes without running water "may be in rural areas, where they are entirely satisfactory."

As he has grudgingly and by compromise come to champion public housing, so by compromise he has come to believe that federal money must be spent for the medical care of the unfortunate. But he violently opposes a nationwide health-insurance system. Before the Pittsburgh Academy of Medicine in February he insisted that federal aid should be extended "only to cases of hardship and poverty."

"Of course this requires a means test," he said, "but a means test today meets no really serious objection." The gospel according to Taft is that, before aid could be gained, the humble recipient must in effect file a pauper's statement, whereupon the kindly upper classes would permit the government to bestow largesse through tax funds. The Social Security Act of 1935 knocked out the philosophy of the means test and substituted the idea of social insurance, with rich and poor alike paying basic taxes and receiving basic protection against a natural human hazard.

Yet on the basis of his present status Taft looks forward optimistically to his reëlection fight, and he is already cultivating the vineyards with a county-by-county organization.

His friends are busy rallying corporation executives and big-business conservatives throughout the country to what they call a "national campaign." One of his friends is Ben E. Tate of Cincinnati, who in personal letters sent in February to men with money and presumably anti-New Deal ideas, called Taft "the personification and symbol of Americanism and constitutional government as conceived by our forefathers."

The 1950 Ohio senatorial election, Tate continued, is "of more importance to the United States of America than anything since the Civil War." He did not ask for campaign contributions in these letters, but delicately hinted that they would be welcomed later. "A budget," he said, "has not been made."

Instead of running from a fight with labor, Taft uses every possible occasion to remark, amiably, that the unions threaten to spend "$250,000" or "$1,000,000" to beat him. Practical labor politicians, aware of the backfire a candidate can set by crying that a "special interest" is trying to "purge" him, now prefer not to admit that they are driving to beat Taft as co-author of the T-H Act; they talk about beating him, instead, as a general "symbol of reaction." Privately they admit, somewhat ruefully, that he may be "hard to lick" in an off-year election when the vote is normally small.

Taft has his own ideas about enticing the farmers back to his—and the GOP—side. "The farmers didn't vote against the Republicans last November," he said recently, pointing out that eight Iowa Republicans were elected to the House with a total 125,000 plurality, although Truman carried the state against Dewey. "The farmers were scared because they didn't get any assurance from the top," Taft added. "They didn't trust the city slicker to protect their interests."

When Taft said in June that he would be "too old" to seek the nomination again, he had in mind at least two terms for Dewey. Since not even one term materialized, Taft can hardly be blamed for dreaming that perhaps, after all, he can get one more crack at the White House. In 1952, he will be a few months younger than Truman was in 1948. In the meantime Taft runs the Senate. Unless the unions cut him down next year, or the Democrats heal the civil-rights breach, he seems likely to continue to run the Senate. As to his chances for the White House, he must realize that some are chosen for bridesmaids who never make the grade as brides. The Grand Old Party might turn in 1952, as it has in the last three campaigns, to a candidate with greater glamor and a bit more sex appeal.

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LEFT OF CENTER

THE DIFFERENT viewpoints that divided Left-of-Center forces before the election are now being expressed in the aftermath of the Fair Deal's defeat in Congress. Opinion splits along two general lines: the defeat was simply strategic, or it was inevitable. Those who theorize that it was strategic argue that the President and his congressional leaders failed to maneuver skillfully; those who think it was inevitable say that the conservative bloc which has dominated Congress since 1939 was simply voting its convictions.

Norman Thomas, for instance, argues in the *Socialist Call* that "there is some suspicion that the Democrats are getting ready to try to hold the labor and liberal vote by the President's statements while conciliating more conservative interests by doing nothing in particular about civil rights or anything else of first-rate importance." The more right-wing Socialist publication, the *New Leader*, turns the spotlight and the heat on Congress rather than on the President. The *New Leader* defines "the task that lies before liberals and labor in the 1950 campaign," maintaining that "if the liberals and labor succeed in giving the Administration a real working majority in next year's elections it will break the hold of the conservative coalition of Republicans and Southern Democrats over Congress for the first time since it came to power in 1938."

The Trotskyist *Militant* makes a fact out of Norman Thomas' "suspicion." "Truman provides a liberal smokescreen for the reactionary conduct of the political machine of which he is the acknowledged leader," they say. The *Militant* concludes that "the political task for labor and the Negro people is to disperse Truman's smokescreen, expose the reactionary aims it conceals and organize a militant independent fight for civil rights and other needed measures." The other Trotskyist publication, *Labor Action*, points the finger at Truman, but accuses him primarily of ineffectual leadership—"The Democrats in Congress are not with the Democratic President." They conclude that "from all this it is clear that another train ride by the President into the hinterland is nothing for the people to pin their hopes to. What is needed to fill the void is a new kind of political party."

The Communist *Daily Worker* simply concludes that the President, the Democratic Party, and the Republican Party are doublecrossing the people just as the Communists always said they would. The *CIO News* quotes its own editorial of November 22 to prove that they "saw it coming." Way back then they said that "there is a strong inclination on the part of Truman's supporters to count their legislative eggs before they've hatched. . . . We're not predicting that Congress will toss the President's legislative plans in the ash can. Far from it. We're merely saying that it would be foolish for the voters who put the Democrats in power to ignore the realities of legislative procedure—to ignore the anti-civil-liberties bloc in Congress—to ignore the need for reminding some of the lawmakers they have a mandate from the people." The *CIO News* proposes "letters, postcards, telegrams, petitions . . . as standard equipment for such a task. Use them!"

The AFL's Labor's League for Political Education places much of the blame on the mass pressure campaigns organized by conservative groups in the US, and, like the CIO, proposes that "a personal letter from back home is worth a bundle of form letters from professional labor-baiters." The *Machinist*, publication of the International Association of Machinists, makes an effort to clarify the situation for its members by praising Truman and blaming the Republican-Dixiecrat coalition. "Writers for the daily newspapers never seem to understand that the people are not easily fooled. If members of his own party desert their platform and their leaders, the people are not going to blame President Truman. . . . Mr. Truman has done his part. . . ."

Textile Labor, publication of the Textile Workers' Union of America, attempts to make an even more detailed analysis of the congressional problem by pointing out that the reorganization act of the 79th Congress, intended to streamline legislative processes, is actually pretty much of a fraud. "Today we have the spectacle of an aged committee chairman displaying public indifference, if not hostility, to the moderately expanded social-security program which, according to rules and custom, he is responsible for pushing through the House. Until some substitute for the seniority rule is worked out and applied, Congress will continue to suffer the inevitable drawbacks of management by men who at worst are literally senile and at best are over-deliberate and lack vigor and staying power."

Capital Comment, publication of the Democratic National Committee, maintains that "the Republicans got what they wanted—a long and serious delay in action on the Fair Deal program. The Southerners got what they wanted—a cloture rule that is no cloture at all . . . . The real issue was the President's entire Fair Deal Program."

Dave Beck, executive vice-president of the Teamsters' Union, feels that if the present situation continues he will be forced to political action. "Labor has no great political machine today. Let us not kid ourselves. But, we have the men and the ability to organize one, we can do it if we are forced to it by anti-labor legislation, and we will do it."

The Americans for Democratic Action, whose convention was scheduled to take place in Chicago on April 8 9 and 10, has revamped its agenda to convert the national conference into an organizational starting point for a liberal counter-attack on the congressional conservative coalition.

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

GEOGRAPHY IN A TIME OF FEAR

by James R. Newman

GEOPOLITICS is generally regarded as a portentous and valuable discipline essential to the practice of statecraft and military strategy; on closer examination it appears, nevertheless, that there is something to it. It is difficult to imagine, of course, that anything sensible could evolve from the rumblings of Halford J. Mackinder (*e.g.*, "Who rules Eastern Europe commands the Heartland. Who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island. Who rules the World-Island commands the world") or from the writings of that tedious Wagnerian oracle General Karl Haushofer; or, indeed, that a discipline which is the staple of the War College's curriculum deserves the serious attention of ordinary men. Yet I am driven by this excellent, if occasionally dusty, symposium on political geography to make concessions; and I go further, in expressing the sincere if somewhat trite and undoubtedly futile wish that it be read and discussed widely among politicians, journalists and other leaders of opinion.

NEW COMPASS OF THE WORLD. Edited by Weigert, Stefansson and Harrison (The Macmillan Company; $5.50).

History, according to the editors of this work, is but "geography set in motion." Although this is one of their less felicitous epigrams, the idea it intends to convey is plain enough. To understand what men have done and what they do—the theme of history—requires an understanding of the lands which they inhabit—the theme of geography. Political geography, in particular, is concerned with the relationship among a nation's political behavior; the frontiers, physical characteristics, climate, biological and mineral resources of its lands; and the occupational distribution, population trends and mass migrations of its people. There are any number of strikingly obvious examples of this interplay. The politics of the South at the time of the Civil War, say, are to a large extent explicable in geographical terms; the Eskimos behave socially, economically and politically as one might expect people to behave living under such peculiar physical and climatic conditions. Crankshaw in his book on Russia and the Russians advances the "great plains" theory as the mystique of Russian behavior, but this is more controversial than either of the other two illustrations. And if one is seeking a convenient, geopolitical formula to explain German, British, Turkish, Texan or New England behavior, one is apt to become perplexed, not to say disappointed.

Why geography "in motion"? What the editors have in mind are the unending changes in men's relationship to the surface of the globe. There are mass migrations, population trends and shifts in the centers of population gravity and in the relative importance of cities and towns. Today it is not merely significant that a particular place is 500 miles from Calcutta, that another is near a large port on the Black Sea, or that another is the railhead of a line running to Sidney; it is almost equally essential to know the distance to Whitehorse and Yellowknife, the air facilities at Yakutsk, or the navigability of the Ob. Methods of agriculture and industry undergo continuous evolution; political frontiers, in recent years especially, are disconcertingly unstable; vast construction projects for dams, canals, irrigation networks, bridges, pipelines, railroads and land reclamation alter physical contours, contract dimensions and elaborate the connectivity of the earth; military needs and military ambitions govern profound modifications in the way men use and travel over the earth they live upon. Finally, national philosophies and social and economic circumstances give a sustained impulse to "rethinking" the globe, as one might say, to drawing new maps and expressing plans, appetites and fears in new geometries and the jargon of strange cartographies.

In their earlier symposium (1943), *Compass of the World*, the editors warned of "the dangerous beginnings of an American Geopolitics, with blueprints for an American imperialism riding the waves of the future." Its aims they described as a "disillusioned balance-of-power solution on the basis of regional groupings, in preparation for what the sponsors of such 'realistic' plans consider inevitable: the Third World War." "We feel the same way today," they write in their introduction to this book. In truth, there is now an even greater need "to warn against the false values of a new Manifest Destiny based on geographical half-truths."

With this objective in view, almost half of the contributions treat of the political geography of the USSR and the bulk of the remainder concern geographical problems of Asia. Vilhjalmur Stefansson's "The Soviet Union Moves North" is an admirable example of disinterested exposition. Stefansson neither views this expansion with alarm nor with complacency. Instead he gives an honest account of certain facts about the Soviet Union which American newspapers and magazines could advantageously substitute —assuming anyone is interested in Russia—for interviews, say, with such noted authorities as the two fliers who, beguiled by "The Voice of America," vaulted straight from the Heartland into the bosom of old Virginia.

In contrast to the relatively primi-

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tive, small towns in the North American Arctic and subarctic (Fairbanks, Nome, Juneau, Yellowknife) there are towns of the Soviet Arctic and subartic (Igarka, Yakutsk, Magadan, Murmansk and Archangel) with large and growing populations, industrialized, and with an impressive array of modern facilities. In July of 1947, as a result of population growth in dozens of cities north of the Circle, it has been estimated, there were 500,000 people in the Soviet Arctic as against a total of 20,000 in Alaska, Canada and Greenland combined.

Stefansson points out that millions of Russians even under the Czars had a northern orientation, an Arctic outlook comparable to that of Americans toward the West. Although the winters of the Dakotas, Montana and Wyoming are similar to those of the Arctic, even to the inhabitants of those states the land 1,000 miles to the north wears a "terrifying mien." Not only are the Russians unafraid of the Arctic because so many have lived on its margins and are familiar with, even fond of, its climate, but the infamous exile system had at least one constructive result in acquainting revolutionary leaders, who had been banished to the remotest regions, with northern conditions and prospects. (Stalin himself spent three years as an exile in a village not far from Igarka.) For the Soviets the Arctic offers a number of inestimable advantages, including: sea routes between the Atlantic and Pacific and great inland waterways; coal, oil, lumber and mineral resources in vast abundance; agricultural lands which with proper handling can be made richly productive; areas comparatively free from danger of attack, and so fitting in with the Soviets' defense-in-depth strategy. Thus it is not surprising that there has been a strong northward movement by the Russians, perhaps, according to Stefansson, the most rapid large-scale colonization in history, the fruits of which will serve the Soviets well in peace or war.

Articles by Robert J. Kerner and E. C. Ropes give succinct but impressive surveys of rail, water and air transport within the Soviet Union. I was struck by the body of authentic information on the USSR which is available. It would appear to be part of a general tacit agreement among our press and government officials to say nothing about the Soviets except it be unfavorable and to extend this stultifying resolve even to ordinary economic, industrial or geographical data. The result is to make us, on this subject, the worst informed nation in the world and yet proud of our ignorance as a badge of anti-Communism.

Owen Lattimore contributes two authoritative essays, one on Inner Asian Frontiers and another, a fascinating description of Yakutia, the biggest of all the autonomous republics of the Soviet Union, with an area of 1.2 million square miles—more than twice as large as Alaska. The climate of this sparsely settled area (400,000), running from 56° N to 76° N, is harsh, the town of Verkhoyansk, for instance, having a record low of —96° F and a January mean of —58° F. Nevertheless agriculture is productive (even tomatoes and melons are grown in the south-central regions) and the permanent frost, by a benign paradox, turns out to have considerable economic value in yielding, by a light thaw each year, a reservoir of moisture sufficient to support the vast forests. Agriculture, coal workings and the mining of gold, tungsten, lead and other metals has, since the Revolution, greatly accelerated both the economic and cultural status of the republic.

An informative article by Robert Strausz-Hupé on Soviet Frontiers—what they are, why they are, and whether they can be maintained—and another by Frank Lorimer, "Population Prospects of the Soviet Union" (I call your attention to the "Motherhood Medal, Second Class" for five children, and the "Order of Mother Heroine [Gold Star]" for ten children), conclude this section.

I was not as impressed as perhaps I should have been by George Kiss's discussion of a TVA on the Danube; unfortunately, all such "blueprints" tend to look alike and this one struck me as too brief and too general to convey anything substantial. Hans Weigert's story of "strategic bases" is as disturbing as it is absorbing. He provides a competent analysis of the concept of "perimeter of defense" advanced by Herbert Hoover in 1946, characterizing it quite properly, I think, as "equivalent to the somber admission that the decision as to what we shall do about strategic bases should be left to the military experts, though the American public [is] perhaps hardly aware of the implication of such a policy." He reviews the course we followed with regard to the Marshalls, the Carolines, the Marianas and the Ryukus, where we in effect told the UN that we intended to maintain, as "trustees" of course, absolute control of these former Japanese-mandated territories; and if the UN didn't like our proposal we would keep the islands anyway. In an "ominous decision" Gromyko supported our plan. What this transaction may cost us when the Russians propose a few absolute trusteeships of their own is painful to consider. As Hanson Baldwin pointed out in a striking article in *Harper's*, this case of "virtual annexation" was no more justified militarily than morally, for "since our only potential enemy would seem to be Russia, far to the north . . . it would be difficult to prove the strategic importance to us of *all* the Marshalls, Carolines and Marianas. . . ."

US policy with respect to Iceland, Greenland, Portugal, the Pacific, the Far North—and this is by no means a complete catalogue of our strategic appetite—is, according to Weigert, dangerously confused. It rests on the assumption that "strategic frontiers are still realities," an assumption which geographically, politically and militarily deserves, in light of the last war's lessons, "close scrutiny"; it means also that unless the UN itself takes over key bases and defends them with strong international forces, military occupation—or worse, outright annexation—is justified on the immediate grounds of national security. Since

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the American people have a strong desire both to be at peace and to keep the world at peace, they endorse the policy of continually widening "strategic frontiers" until the arrival of that happy day when the UN is "strong enough" to take over. Meanwhile, however, they are oblivious of the thermal potentialities of the cold war, "of the meaning and dangers of the new American frontier"—a frontier which requires for its maintenance even more of weapons than of rationalizations, and which makes a shambles of any real policy of collective security.

Several other chapters in this valuable book deserve discussion that I cannot give them here. I can do no more than call attention to G. L. Bertram's balanced essay, "Population Trends and the World's Biological Resources," which makes a great deal more sense from every standpoint than the three-dollar dreadfuls by Messrs. Vogt and Osborn. I give just one small item worth noticing:

> When we are told that the world shortage of wheat and rice is so many million tons, that is a shortage in transported cereals. . . . It is to be remembered, too, how narrow is the margin between virtuous thrift and avaricious hoarding. If 100 million small cultivators in Southeast Asia, when famine is rumored, retain each so little as an extra 10 kilograms of grain, the towns will be short of a million tons.

J. Russel Smith, in his contribution, "Science, the New Machinery" and "The Population of Asia," reminds us that a Harvard scientist has estimated the offspring of two rabbits as follows: "If they lived and grew up and increased at the normal rate that rabbits increase, [they] would in a short time produce numbers so great that they would cover the entire surface of the earth and there would be enough more to go off into space in a column a mile square with the velocity of light." Here, I should think, is a menace unequivocally worth worrying about. I trust that our Central Intelligence Agency has mastered the facts, that our planners have a plan, and that all concerned, as Churchill would say, are appropriately vigilant.

GHETTO LAUGHTER

TEVYE'S DAUGHTERS, by Sholom Aleichem. Translated by Frances Butwin (Crown Publishers; $3).

SHOLOM ALEICHEM once told his friends: "As a child when I was seized with laughter nothing could help; the more I was beaten, the harder I laughed." The laughter in *Tevye's Daughters*, as in the earlier collection of Sholom Aleichem's stories, *The Old Country*, is largely of the mixed-with-tears variety, or, more aptly to convey the meaning of the Yiddish expression, *Lachen mit Yastchekes*, laughing-with-needles-being-stuck-in-you. ("I happened to look down into the river and I became frightened at my own image. My skin was all peeled off, my eyes were swollen shut, my arms were like sausages and my feet were bloody. 'Is that you Motek from Somashken?' I said to myself and burst out laughing.")

For the oppressed ghetto folk of the Czar's Jewish Pale in the latter half of the nineteenth century the needles were not wanting: restrictions of every variety frustrating their economic and educational ambitions; threats of pogroms; subjection to the whims of their Gentile masters; and, above all, incredible hand-to-mouth poverty which, according to official reports, encompassed 90 percent of the Jewish population. Against all this their chief release and armor was humor. And the main source and subject of this humor was precisely the impossible nature of their lives, and the incommensurability between the Jews' role as the Chosen People and the miserable details of their existence. This irony (the irony of the human situation in a "non-human," "non-rationalistic" universe) is the essence of all great humor; the best of Dickens, Twain, Lardner and Balzac, for example, reaches this core of the human comedy. In Sholom Aleichem, tragedy is ringed with humor, but as he turns the whole 'round and 'round all can clearly see through an occasional chink to the exposed core.

"Who is a hero?" asks a Jewish witticism. "He who can suppress the urge to tell a joke." For to the ghetto Jew humor and irony were as essential as bread and religion. Leavened with ironic humor, poverty, their most vital and certain experience, could be celebrated, made the basis of many subtle distinctions and lead to such cosmically comic archetypes as Sholom Aleichem's *Shlimazl* (a man gifted with bad luck), *Shlimiel* (the supremely expert botcher), and *Luftmensch* (a man who no longer deals with tangibles but only in "shadow" goods such as stocks and grain futures, and forever pursues an elusive fortune-to-be-gained). Viewed ironically, too, poverty was evidently a fulfillment of a divine wish; it set the Jews apart as the Chosen People, much as a higher level of suffering distinguishes the human race from the beasts.

The major hero in Sholom Aleichem's stories is a man or woman with the ironic inner view whose semi-conscious aim is to defeat the animal within him, to express the divinity of which he is presumably the chosen instrument: Tevye leads a just life, (mis)quotes scriptural wisdom, draws humor from his deepest sorrows and continues hoping against hope; Tevye's daughters love constantly despite all misfortune; an unemployed semi-invalid fasts every other day; the "Merrymakers" revolt once a year from their drudgery and pack as much desperate hilarity into one day as possible. In essence we have here the modern "heroic" man; his naïve faith in progress shaken by incongruities, feeling himself adrift in an impossible, indifferent world, he essays the adventure of living for its own sake, yet half hopes for some extra-curricular reward.

For in Sholom Aleichem, too, all pots at the end of all rainbows are filled with sorrow and, despite the assumptions of accepted ritual, only the *possibility* of Grace. In any event, the end is *bashert* (fated), hence the trajectory of the rainbow itself is what is basic. Although religion permeates every corner of Sholom Aleichem's world, his characters are struck by

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the incongruity of faith and misfortune. Tongue in cheek, they all say with Tevye: "If God listened to every fool what a different world it would be." Nevertheless, Tevye persists in seeking a gleam of logic in the dark. To unearth reasonable or scriptural causes for every misery and express them with wry wit is for him almost equivalent to canceling out his wretchedness.

Withal, there were positive values to the ghetto: a sense of community within a traditional framework of folkway and ritual; an acceptance of Jewishness and of poverty; an ambivalent but persistent sense of destiny. (These values have yet to be replaced for most of the ghetto's heirs.) For the creative writer the ghetto provided a unified body of experience with clearly evident traditional roots. An "enlightened" Jew, Sholom Aleichem loves the ghetto, even idealizes it, but he also pricks its hypocrisies and shams. And the case for social reform (or ultimate *Tzedakah*, the Hebrew word for "charity" which actually means "justice"), though never obtrusive, is neatly underlined throughout.

History has focused in the Jew and in the relationship between Jew and Gentile the moral issues of our epoch. But in a sense the Jew has been continually serving as a kind of antenna of the human race, repeatedly thrust into various crucibles to face the ultimate ironies of existence. Thus the word "Jew" has come to connote the alien, the scapegoat, the unwilling, knowing human cog in the machine world, and the focusing, catalytic outsider. Hence, in part, the prevalence of Jewish protagonists (Swann, Bloom, Joseph, *et al.*) in the modern novel. Hence, too, the particular aptness of the recent emergence of Sholom Aleichem from the Yiddish fastness which hid his genius from most of us for almost three decades after his death.

To convey in translation the rich flavor and verbal, cerebral wit of Sholom Aleichem's flowing, sinewy Yiddish is, of course, impossible. Every story is told by a narrator and the simplest statement contains overtones, paradoxes, self-derisions that can only be hinted at in translation. And, as with Joyce (in terms of Irish and mythical experience), subtle nuances add a universe of connotation (in terms of Jewish and universal experience) to surface accounts. Nevertheless Mrs. Butwin has succeeded in making the rhythm of the Yiddish felt and in capturing the basic spirit of the original. A fresh world of metaphor awaits the non-Yiddish-speaking reader of these tales. And the intimate use and misuse of Hebrew terms and quotations remind us constantly of the direct line that connects the Tevyes and Menachem Mendels to the ancient world.

A folk-poet, Sholom Aleichem forgoes complex individual characterization and explicitly tragic themes in favor of the spontaneous revelation and archetypal creations of folk-truth. He also betrays a tendency to stereotyping and blunting of perception that vitiate his novels. But, read in clusters of three or so, the stories in this collection and in the earlier, and superior, *The Old Country*, are immensely entertaining. Their range includes grotesques, lyric idylls, Browningesque portraits and dramatic epistles. Their accent is always on the deeper suspense of character rather than of plot. And, as they reveal the quintessence of a vanished people's spirit and culture, they reflect a fresh, wry-lusty, hilarious-painful light on the perennial ironies of human existence.

ALEXANDER KLEIN

POSTSCRIPT TO VICTORY

THE GIRL ON THE VIA FLAMINIA, by Alfred Hayes (Harper; $2.50).

ALFRED HAYES'S second novel on conquered Italy is not as good fiction as his first, but it is nonetheless important as a timely political handbook for those Americans who have power and responsibility in the conduct of our foreign affairs.

The Girl on the Via Flaminia is an extension of *All Thy Conquests*, published three years ago. In the first book Hayes expressed his interest in, and sympathy for, the land and people that Hitler and Mussolini stubbornly yielded to the Anglo-American armies. The method he used was to examine a number of types of both victor and vanquished. The result was a significant, accurate study of an unhappy time and place. In the second product of his deep preoccupation with this subject he has looked at the miserable landscape through a narrower focus and, it seems to me, with less artistry.

The story begins with real warmth, and promises at first to be a better novel than *All Thy Conquests* because it is fitted more precisely to the normal novel form (the first book was more a collection of episodic vignettes). It ends, however, in what can only be regarded as a political allegory.

The characters, human enough at first, soon turn into such animated labels as American Naïveté, European Cynicism and Old World Despair. The central figures are an American soldier who is homesick in the true sense of the word and an Italian girl with whom he is tenuously united.

They set up housekeeping in the home of a woman who preserves a façade of respectability while stooping, under the hardships of life in the Rome of late 1944, to such off-limits activities as procuring. She is one type. Another is her husband, the tired, senile liberal. A third is her son, who embodies all the absurdities of Western Europe between its two latest wars —ill-placed pride, self-pity, intolerance, an unbecoming contempt for the successful Americans, and futile belligerence. This obnoxious youth belongs to a species always useful, if not indispensable, to fascism—the political innocent, saturated with the poison of nationalism, who gladly marches off on his leader's imperial adventures, unhappily discovers that they are using real bullets in the winning of empire, gets hurt, and thereafter blames everyone but himself for the retribution visited upon his country.

The plot is concerned mainly with the pathetic efforts of a guileless, rather bewildered American soldier who wants to make himself a home in

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Italy, a home away from billets and chow lines. He wants a girl for that home, a kind of simulated wife. His need there is domestic, not exclusively sexual. An Italian woman who has herself experimented with that kind of arrangement and found it satisfactory locates the girl for him. The alliance is established under circumstances that would seem to be auspicious. Robert has what appears to be a good deal, from a soldier's standpoint. He presumes that Lisa will find it equally good for herself: he is gentle with her; he provides necessities and luxuries she could never obtain otherwise; he treats her with respect and presents her to their small world as his wife. The difficulty is that the girl has pride.

It is at this point that the story begins to be a little incredible as pure character study. Lisa behaves as if she is devoid of a sense of security or gratitude. There is nothing in her background to give plausibility to the delicacy of her feelings about the relationship or her inability to respond with any generosity to the American soldier's diffident gestures.

Despite this unlikely state of affairs, *The Girl on the Via Flaminia* is still a good book, an important book in a year when ECA, Western Union and the North Atlantic Pact are held forth as the last bastions against the forces of darkness. The point that Hayes seems to be making is that the way of the liberator is hard, that having conquered them or freed them, as the case may be, we cannot make the old nations love us with bread and kind words alone; that notwithstanding their past errors and present weakness, the people of Western Europe are individual human beings and demand to be treated as such.

The Army used to publish little handbooks on how not to irritate our allies, and ship them along as standard equipment for soldiers about to land on foreign soil. Maybe a condensation of *The Girl on the Via Flaminia* would be a good object to stick into the briefcases of the diplomats and businessmen now following the roads and airlanes the soldiers opened up a few years ago. JACK WEEKS

WORTH REPRINTING

THE WOUND DRESSER, by Walt Whitman. Edited by Richard M. Bucke. Introduction by Oscar Cargill (The Bodley Press; $3).

THE PORTABLE VOLTAIRE. Edited by Ben Ray Redman (Viking; $2).

IN DECEMBER, 1862, Walt Whitman went down from New York to see his brother who had been wounded in the battle of Fredericksburg. By the end of the month he was in Washington, where he found a few hours' work each morning as a copyist in the office of a paymaster in the Union Army. The letters he wrote home to his mother in Brooklyn were first published in 1897 but have been out of print for almost fifty years. They are republished now with three letters written in the same period to the New York *Times* and the Brooklyn *Eagle*.

By the late 1850's, Oscar Cargill writes in an Introduction to the present volume, Whitman was already familiar in New York hospitals as an attendant at the beds of sick and wounded men, "chiefly omnibus drivers." In Washington, he continued this habit in the Army hospitals, "beginning at first with casual visits to these establishments to see some of the Brooklyn men, wounded or sick, here." Soon he had extended his attention to any "who seemed most susceptible to it, and needing it," until he had made some 600 visits in two years, seeing from 80,000 to 100,000 sick and wounded soldiers.

"I never miss a day," he could write at one time. "I generally go to the hospitals from 12 to 4—and then again from 6 to 9." "No one interferes with me, guards, nurses, doctors, nor anyone," as he travels the wards "in my own style." He understood that "the work of the army hospital visitor is indeed a trade, an art, requiring both experience and natural gifts, and the greatest judgment." "The mission I am on here" was self-appointed, the work whatever lay to hand. He read to the men, wrote letters for them, and fed "some that will not touch their food otherwise, nor for anybody else." Small gifts—whether of money or clothes or stamps or paper—were bought from his own meager earnings or from sums (as small as $2) sent him by acquaintances to help the work. On one occasion he gave "a great treat of ice cream a couple of days ago—went round myself through about 15 large wards—(I bought some 10 gallons, very nice)."

These and similar incidents are the data of the letters, but the theme is the soldier himself. "The American soldier is full of affection and the yearning for affection. . . . I believe that even the moving around among the men, or through the ward, of a hearty, healthy, clean, strong, generous-souled person, man or woman, full of humanity and love, sending out invisible, constant currents thereof, does immense good to the sick and wounded." Thus his theory; in practice, he "can

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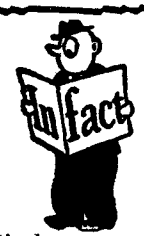

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testify that friendship has literally cured a fever, and the medicine of daily affection, a bad wound." Undoubtedly, Whitman had great sympathetic powers. He probably described his function exactly when he wrote: "Mother, I have real pride in telling you that I have the consciousness of saving quite a number of lives by saving them from giving up."

Whitman's heroic work of charity belongs to the history of the Civil War. But the impulse to the work and its effect on the man belong to the history of Whitman himself. If the work absorbed him, it also supported him. "The work grows upon me and fascinates me." ("Fascinates" is a recurring word.) "I can never cease to crave more and more knowledge of actual soldiers' life, and to be among them as much as possible." The sacrifice was more than compensated, but the compensation transcended human attachments—the many close friendships Whitman formed in the wards. During his earlier work among the New York "roughs," we learn from Cargill's Introduction, Whitman was concerned with establishing some kind of brotherhood—"the institution of the dear love of comrades," he called it. This was involved in his concept of "democracy," which, he wrote, "infers such loving comradeship . . . without which it will be incomplete." His work in the Washington hospitals may have been partly inspired by such motives but (fortunately for this book) any hint of theory or policy is absent from *The Wound Dresser*.

The letters, written to his mother, are open, enthusiastic, passionate, but the emotion is always close to the account of the work. "My feelings are kept in a painful condition a great part of the time." Again: "America seems to me now, though only in her youth, but brought already here, feeble, bandaged, and bloody in hospital." He is intimate and he is practical. "Well, mother, I should like to know all the domestic affairs at home; don't you have the usual things eating, etc.?" And he writes the kind of news he wants to hear. The letters contain a remarkably complete picture of Whitman himself, the American "original" on the heroic scale. But the effect is cumulative; the details are slight and all the more telling for that. None is more characteristic than: "Mother, don't you miss *Walt* loafing around, and carting himself off to New York toward the latter part of every afternoon?"

"In every author let us distinguish the man from his work." So wrote Voltaire in the *Philosophical Dictionary*. But such a distinction is rarely observed in the case of Voltaire himself, and his present editor encourages the habit to regard his works very much in relation to their author. He is greater than his writings; that is, they gain distinction as the expression of a man who was himself the expression (as no other individual) of his age. His name has become synonymous with its brilliance, its clarity, its wit, its common sense. In an age of skepticism, "I have taken St. Thomas Didymus for my patron saint, who always insisted on an examination with his own hands." It was the age of the Encyclopedists: "I could wish that Newton has written operettas," said Voltaire. "I should esteem him all the higher. . . . We should . . . open all the doorways of our minds to all the sciences and all the sentiments."

This volume represents very well in 570 pages the variety Voltaire himself achieved. The selection includes the first part of *Candide*, several tales, excerpts from the *Philosophical Dictionary*, a number of his letters, and a sample of those most readable *English Letters*. The volume is up to the standards of a series it has become repetitious to praise. Its least commendable aspect is the ambition of such publishing ventures to inclusiveness. Works easily available (in this instance, *Candide*) take up space that might more profitably be given to lesser known writings or those hard to come by.

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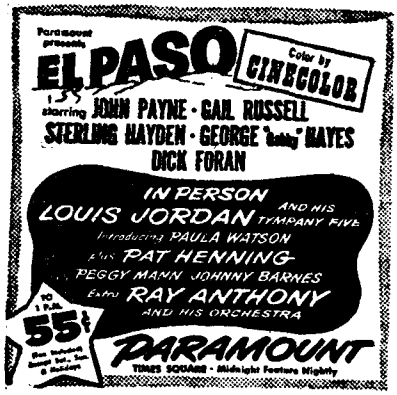

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THEATRE: "Scenery"

SOME YEARS AGO Sidney Howard summed up his view of stage setting by saying, "My only rule is—get Jo Mielziner." Howard's rule has been scrupulously followed by many managers. Its chief virtue is that it confesses either ignorance of or indifference to the esthetics of the question. Most reviewers are not so honest. It is obvious from their writing that even where they manifest good judgment on other aspects of theatrical production, their understanding of scenic design is less than rudimentary. More alarming, however, is the fact that a great many theatre people are themselves vague on what they expect from the setting of a play—except that it ought to look "real" and be attractive.

The current exhibition of scene design and costume at the Metropolitan Museum of Art ("Behind American Footlights") suggests a statement of principles in regard to the visual aspect of the theatre to supplement my five "Footlight Chats" on acting and direction. In the early years of this century stage settings had become a combination of academically Victorian landscape painting for exteriors with a kind of tawdry rococo for interiors. Costume plays were done with sets so heavily "historical" that Shakespeare's plays had to be drastically cut: the weight of the sets made quick changes impossible. The setting for the ordinary drawing room was a reflection of the gimcrack modishness of the nineteenth-century French theatre rather than any actual place. To give a production visual interest, producers spent money on some form of gaudy display or on special effects such as a train wreck, a great fire, a chariot race with real horses, as in "Quo Vadis?" or "The Whip."

Later, David Belasco began to stress meticulous naturalism. A stage replica of a Childs restaurant became a famous setting; a scientist's library contained all the books that such a person might own; rainstorms and sunrises were reproduced with astounding verisimilitude.

Around 1915 Robert Edmond Jones, Lee Simonson and others became the pioneers of a new stage craft inspired by European theorists and producers—Craig, Appia, Reinhardt. The stage setting was now conceived mainly as a medium for the projection of a play's essential mood. Between 1919 and 1929, a whole new generation of scene-designers who had learned from Jones's and Simonson's example came to the fore. Reviewers began to devote considerable space to the work of these new men.

Décor, as it was then fondly called, has once more become a routine affair with tasteful and simplified decorativeness or naturalism as the norm. The reviewers' response to "scenery" has also become routine, with comments that range from the commonplace to the ridiculous. We even hear people affirm that plays might be better done without any "scenery" at all.

Here we have a glimpse of the basic misunderstanding. There is no such thing as a play without scenery. A bare stage is a setting; whatever is seen by an audience is part of the effect of the whole. The stage setting therefore is not primarily decoration, but a function of the play as an organism.

The director may wish his setting or, more accurately, stage arrangement to appear inconspicuous or he may wish it to play a prominent role in the evocation of a particular emotion in the audience, as in the case of the sensuous musical comedy. The director may feel that the place which the setting is supposed to represent must be photographically convincing in order for the play to be interesting, or he may believe that a mere indication of place is sufficient. In certain instances no actual place need be represented at all, and realistic detail is not only irrelevant but undesirable. The

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choice of setting depends on the director's artistic purpose, his creative idea in regard to the nature, quality or meaning of the entire production.

The director formulates the play's scenic or visual problem; the designer brings his talent to bear on its solution. Exhibitions of scenic art and most criticism of it tend to make scene-design seem an adjunct of painting or decoration to be admired independently of its function in the theatre, where it is meant to serve the play as articulated by actors before an audience. That the set of "Summer and Smoke" looked pretty was of far less significance than that its playing space constricted freedom of movement. That the set of "The Big Knife," which most reviewers thought handsome, looks like a Hollywood steak house is far less disturbing than that it makes it difficult for the audience to concentrate on the actors or to conceive of the play's action in any but the most literal terms—an approach detrimental to the play's most cogent elements. Even such brilliantly witty sets as those of "The Madwoman of Chaillot" may be criticized for a static quality that reduces their practicability for a kind of "magic" flexibility the play suggests.

It doesn't make good theatre sense for an audience to applaud a set for its abstract "beauty." A set is a utensil which cannot be judged until its worth is proved in practice by the whole course of the play's development on the stage. HAROLD CLURMAN

ON THE AIR: A Modest Proposal

THIS WEEK, celebrating its second anniversary, "On the Air" indulges in some birthday pontification. It gives you herewith what I consider a thoroughly practical, realistic plan for recapture of a part of our radio spectrum from the hands of extreme reaction.

The reactionary in question is G. A. Richards, principal owner of three 50,000-watt radio stations—KMPC, Los Angeles; WGAR, Cleveland; WJR, Detroit. In a petition filed with the Federal Communications Commission in February, Richards admitted the authenticity of memoranda and letters signed by him and ordering newscasters and commentators employed at KMPC to slant news. The complaints lodged against Richards with the FCC charged, on the basis of this evidence, that his "news" was clearly anti-Semitic, Negrophobe, unfair to any type of political or economic thinking to the left of Tom Dewey and the NAM.

The case against Richards, and some of his earlier answers, was handled here in some detail on December 6. As a result of charges filed against him in February, 1948, by the Los Angeles Radio News Club, the FCC ordered an investigation into the records of all three Richards-controlled stations. The Commission finally came to a mild decision. It ordered one of its seven members to conduct a public hearing at Los Angeles in January. That hearing was not intended to be the means of returning an indictment that might result in immediate revocation of Richards' licenses. It was to be only "a hearing to determine whether a hearing was to be held."

Delays ensued. The January hearing was postponed to February. Richards filed a petition just before the second date. This was the brief in which he acknowledged the incriminatory documents. But he pointed out that he had been a very sick man for some years; that overzealousness on behalf of his concept of Americanism might have led him to offend the sensibilities of certain religious and racial groups; that at any rate everything was now clean around the three stations. Therefore, he asked to have the whole matter dropped. The FCC, refusing to go along, set a new date of March 23.

The Commission's general counsel and several assistants had already been in Los Angeles about two weeks preparing for the March 23 hearing, and

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Commissioner E. M. Webster was ready to leave for the Coast as hearing officer, when Richards' attorneys came through with still another petition. This was two-pronged. There were affidavits from physicians contending that Richards' very life would be in jeopardy if he were forced to go through with the hearing now. There was assurance that, within 30 days (*i.e.*, by April 16), he would "transfer the voting control of all stock . . . in the three corporations." On these grounds, the attorneys asked for another 30 days' extension.

On the say-so of the physicians, the Commission granted the extension. But it has not dropped the news-slanting charges—as yet. Right now, Richards stands ordered to make his transfer application not later than April 18. Then the FCC will decide whether that application would be "in the public interest" and whether the "transfer" plan should be considered along with the charges of news slanting.

Outright revocation of license, for good and sufficient reason, may be ordered by the Commission any time. However, it is so drastic a punishment that it is rarely invoked. Richards' petition for "transfer" will lay his licenses open to attack from all quarters, and the Commission must logically listen to any qualified petitioner.

I propose that such a petition be filed; that a consortium be formed to obtain the privileges now held by Richards. It can be done, but it must be done promptly and vigorously.

Here is a suggested setup for the kind of corporation I have in mind. Underwriting would be done by citizens like Marshall Field, Henry Morgenthau Jr., William Rosenwald, Nelson Rockefeller, and James Roosevelt. The aid of outstanding civic leaders in the three communities would be enlisted, as well as the backing of large labor unions which have shown interest in radio—the International Ladies' Garment Workers, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, the Railway Brotherhoods, and the United Electrical and Radio Workers.

A program board would be made up of Raymond Swing(whom I nominate as president of the corporation); Norman Corwin; Ted Cott, program vice-president of WNEW, New York; Harry Maizlish, who would be borrowed or hired away from his job as general manager of the Warner Bros. station, KFWB, Los Angeles; and Harold Franklin, radio director of the Institute for Democratic Education.

Burton K. Wheeler is one of Richards' lawyers. I propose as general counsel for the new corporation Clifford J. Durr, who was the most vigorous anti-reactionary Commissioner the FCC ever had.

Finally, a top organizer is needed. I nominate Michael N. Nisselson, president of the Amalgamated Bank of New York.

The plan is feasible. It would not be a philanthropic venture in any sense—it would be Big Business, but with a conscience. I have not consulted any of the men named; the idea is entirely my own, and I use their names for their symbolic value. At the same time, I appeal to them—and other Americans like them—to get into this fight against the type of radio Richards has given us.

SAUL CARSON

MUSIC: Metropolitan Campaign

IN THE PAST MONTH the Metropolitan Opera Association has been seeking to raise $250,000, in order to balance the books next season. The request is singularly petty and uncourageous: if the Metropolitan is the great cultural institution its trustees think it is, then two or three millions are needed to renovate its house, its stage, its productions and its personnel. If it does not deserve as much as this, it does not deserve a cent. The attempt to raise just enough money to keep operating on the present minimal level should not earn anyone's respect, though there is every probability that the campaign will easily reach its goal.

Since the turn of the year, the Metropolitan has begun to stir from its long artistic lethargy. The harsh criticism heaped upon its management last fall, when its financial troubles aroused quite as much public anger as sympathy, has seemingly exerted a beneficial influence. The company has come through with three productions—"Salome," "The Marriage of Figaro" and "Falstaff"—which prove that the high standards that once prevailed are neither entirely forgotten nor entirely unattainable today. The Wagner performances have also been uniformly excellent. Though the run-of-the-mill representations of other operas have retained much of their familiar sloppiness, they have nearly all improved perceptibly. All the members of the Metropolitan, from the general director to the last second fiddle in the pit, appear to have developed a touch of artistic pride, and even the Rigolettos and Lucias are infused with fresh animation and teamwork.

Even though the Metropolitan may have begun to better itself, it has a long pull ahead. One of its most challenging tasks is the modernization of its cumbersome stage machinery. It must get rid of the eyesores, some of them a quarter of a century old, that too often pass for scenery, supplanting them with tasteful and readily manageable decors that will be a far cry from the "Ring" monstrosities that cost more than $100,000 last season. It must also costume each production uniformly, including in its budget the cost of costumes for the stars, and refusing to let them wear the garish and incredibly expensive outfits in which they now like to set themselves apart from the minor principals and chorus. It must throw out its archaic, vapid ballet, and provide dancing that would not be hooted off the Roxy stage.

The management must stop casting singers in roles for which their competence is not apparent to the naked eye or ear. (Pay no attention to the

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allegation that there is a world shortage of operatic singers. There is an ample supply of able artists to take care of every role in a thoroughly interesting and varied season's repertory; and it is bad management to present any opera for which suitable singers are not at hand.) And the stars' wages must be reduced. No singer can possibly be entitled to $1,000 for a single appearance (which may, like the role of Brünnhilde in "Siegfried," require as little as 20 minutes of singing) when some 300 other people also have to be paid.

One of the Metropolitan's worst faults is its failure to plan far enough ahead. In the concert business, the booking season extends from December to March or early April. By now most of the major artists have arranged their concert engagements for 1949-50. Since these dates provide their chief income, they are unlikely to cancel one if the Metropolitan should belatedly ask for their services. As a result, singers come and go throughout the season, sandwiching in appearances to suit their convenience and frequently being unable to appear for rehearsals.

No opera this season has retained for more than three performances the entire cast that was rehearsed for it. Radio listeners have little idea of the improvised casts that often pop up in week-night operas, for the management nearly always puts its best foot forward in the Saturday broadcasts. Until the Metropolitan learns to make up its mind about its schedule early enough to obtain substantial blocks of time—several uninterrupted weeks—from each of its major artists, half the labors of the stage director and the conductor will be wasted and a great many audiences will continue to be subjected to inferior performances.

To win our respect, the Metropolitan must fire some people who persistently fail to deliver the requisite artistic goods—stage directors, conductors and singers. And at the other extreme, it must stop its habit of blithely failing to engage greatly gifted artists who could bring more distinction to the company than a good many of the people now in it. Only a disinterested, first-class opera house deserves public financial support. CECIL SMITH

MOVIES

Mild Stimulant

ERIC PORTMAN'S style of acting is one that makes extensive use of a rather impassive profile and is in general highly flavored for everyday consumption. He must have enjoyed himself enormously in "Corridor of Mirrors," a Guignol contrivance that requires him to clothe himself in opera hat and cape and drive about in a hansom cab.

This British chiller imagines Portman to be a reasonably modern Londoner whose infatuation with the past has become a morbid obsession. The Italian Renaissance is his period and he has provided himself with a Venetian palazzo complete with Grand Canal somewhere in Regent's Park (the layout seems, in fact, a little larger than Regent's Park). There he collects personal mementos of the Borgias and moons over the portrait of an Italian lady who proved heartless to him in an earlier incarnation. He detests feminine laughter.

When Portman stumbles on this beauty's double in a Mayfair supper club, the atmosphere rapidly turns Cocteau baroque. The girl (Edana Romney, a newcomer described inevitably as a discovery) falls under his Doge spell and the supposition that this will do her no good is emphasized by the ugly discovery that every closet in the palace contains the exquisitely gowned effigy of a Renaissance beauty. There is also a touch of insanity in the servant quarters and an obese white cat occasionally scuttles across the set. Persons who find themselves frightened by the predictable gooseflesh of this leisurely film should not read *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch* when alone in the house.

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Is modern man destroying himself?

Yes, says William Vogt, author of the frightening but brilliant "Road to Survival," in a coming Nation article. No, says Earl Parker Hanson, author of "Chile, Land of Progress," and the forthcoming book "New Worlds Emerging." Is the future as bleak as Vogt describes? Is the depletion of the soil and the rapid increase of population throughout the world leading us toward starvation? Or can we, as Hanson believes, really do something to ward off approaching disaster? Don't miss this stimulating debate in early issues of The Nation.

Who is "CAROLUS"?

"Carolus" is The Nation's new correspondent inside Germany. But he is such a prominent German, and so active in political and labor movements, that in order to be free to write the truth as he sees it he will sign his articles "Carolus." Since Germany is considered the powder keg of Europe right now, and may remain so for years, it is urgent that the inside story be brought into the open. "Carolus" will do it—for Nation readers exclusively.

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It's a strange world of science we're living in today. Research in nuclear physics now shows we can't depend on established physical laws any more—probability, rather than certainty, becomes the rule. What effect will this have on the materialistic concept of physics? Leonard Engel, science writer for The Nation, in an article to be published very soon, reconsiders the relationship of modern physics and theology.

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